

Health Careers Team – Final Report 2008 – 2009

Submitted by:

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Introduction:

The Health Careers Team met seven times during the 2008/09 school year, three months in the first semester and four months in the second semester. Additionally, the co-chairs met separately prior to each of the committee meetings. The overall average attendance was 14 participants, and the attendance ranged from a low of 10 members in December and February to a high of 18 members in March. The most consistent attendance came from those participants from Elgin Community College and school district U-46. It might be well to mention that district U-46 has its own well established Health Occupations program whereas the other three school districts tend to use ECC's Tech Prep dual credit program as the capstone coursework for their health-career oriented high school students.

Special Thank You's to:

1. Peg Brolley from St. Charles district 303 for her description of the new Health Occupations program in that district.
2. Polly Nash and Candy Moore for their description of the ICCB meeting regarding a pilot High School to College Success Report program.
3. Polly Nash, Bill Ratzburg, and Tom Chockley for various update reports on Career Clusters, Career Pathways, and CTE Programs of Study during the year.
4. Mary VanSlyck and the high school career specialists for conducting counselor interviews used to complete the Team's survey of counselor information about health-career oriented high school students. Each of the eleven high schools in the region has a career specialist; hence, they are one of the fastest and most effective ways to send information out to the high school counselors.
5. Mary VanSlyck, Candy Moore, Polly Nash, and Beth Santell for their presentation to the high school career specialists on May 7th, 2009.

What Was Learned:

1. Listening to the high school Health Occupations teachers, we learned that students and parents are quite different from school to school even within the same school district. Thus, each school seems so individualized that no one approach is likely to work for all schools in all districts. This understanding led to the team's decision to prepare a folder of information about college readiness and Health Career programs at ECC and to select high school counselors, Health Occupations teachers, science departments and their chairpersons or divisionals as the target audience for the information folder.

2. The Health Careers Team has learned it would recommend adding high school and college counselors to membership on all Alliance committees.
3. The Team learned that realistic preparation for college study for a student begins long before the high school years and certainly by the time that students are in middle or junior high school.
4. The Team has become ever stronger advocates regarding the Gates Foundation booklet, *Toward a More Comprehensive Conception of College Readiness*. The Team believes that the work ethic and life skills described in the Gates booklet show the importance not just of academic learning but also of strong study values in order for college students to succeed.
5. The Team learned from its survey of high school counselors that, while counselors do recommend math and science for health-career oriented students, they should emphasize the value of job shadowing and/or volunteer work experiences in health settings to students as well.

What Was Produced:

1. Through Team discussions we obtained a better understanding of the shared goals as well as the differences in work environments in Health Occupations courses at the high school and ECC levels.
2. The Team, with excellent help from the regional career specialists, obtained results from a survey of high school counselors regarding the characteristics of high school students interested in health careers, their math and science choices, and some of the kinds of information that counselors offer to those students.
3. The Team prepared an information folder. The Team brought to bear much of the wisdom gained from our committee meetings in choosing to develop an information folder. The Team recognized the need for getting accurate information out to high school students and their parents; hence, it recognized the need for information about college readiness in general and about strong college ready work ethics and values for students to develop, and it decided to direct health careers information to high school counselors and career specialists who are among the first people students turn to for career information. Career specialists welcomed the information folders and will spread them to the high school counselors and science faculties in their schools.

Recommendations:

1. The American Medical Association website strongly urges that health-career interested students gain the most from job shadowing and/or volunteer exposure to the world of health careers. Hence, if the HCT committee were to suggest to school counselors an important improvement in the information they give to health careers interested students, it would be that they recommend volunteer experiences in health career settings.
2. Collaboration between secondary and post-secondary has been valuable for all concerned. It has fostered greater understanding of the teaching/learning environment at the high school and ECC level. Continued collaboration was strongly recommended.

3. Effort should be made to include middle school/ junior high school counselors in efforts to encourage students:
 - a. To make use of Career Cruising software to help them clarify their career interests,
 - b. To encourage a larger number of students to plan on college study as a part of their career preparations.
4. Career Cruising software also provides two facets that might be of good use to college readiness efforts:
 - a. In addition to career interest and career preparation sections, the software can be written to incorporate local high school coursework relevant to a variety of career clusters and pathways ,
 - b. The software provides a number of report options that deliver career interest statistics.
5. Students are some of the best recruiting representatives. Examples: High school Health Occupations Students of America students went to middle school parent nights to talk about the high school health occupations programs. Anecdotal feedback was extremely positive. ECC HOSA students have gone to the U-46 practice sessions to help them in preparation for state HOSA competition. The ECC students served as mock judges and offered their experiences in ECC health career programs. Thus, the Health Careers Team recommends increased use of students to inform interested students and their parents about health careers.

Health Careers Team Status for 2009-2010:

This spring the Health Careers Team began discussing its group objectives. In doing so, the Health Careers Team decided that it had fulfilled the general goals it had for 2008/09. The Team believes that it is time to go to “ready reserve” status at the end of this school year. Hence, in the future the committee will not meet on an active basis.

However, should the need arise within the Alliance committees for input on health careers, the committee would serve in a consultative capacity. Or, if the Alliance believes that there are new objectives for a Health Careers Team, then the committee would return to active, participating status, and no new Health Careers Team would need to be formed.