



Mayo Clinic
200 First Street SW
Rochester, Minnesota 55905

November 21, 2014

Members of the Legislative Health Care Workforce Commission:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the Legislative Health Care Workforce Commission proposed recommendations. Educating our future health care workforce is an integral part of Mayo Clinic's mission and serves as one of our three shields along with practice and research. We welcomed the invitation to share with the Commission our role in educating our future workforce via Dr. Silber's participation on the Health Care Workforce panel in August. For your reference, I've included a brief background document on Mayo's Education Shield for which I am responsible as Executive Dean for Education.

Mayo Clinic appreciates the deliberation and input that has gone into creating these recommendations. The comments below are laid out by charge and specific strategy to support the charge.

Charge 1: Identify current and anticipated health care workforce shortages, by both provider type and geography.

(2) Mayo would support and welcome the opportunity to serve on a state health professions council. We envision that the Council would provide a collaborative environment in which to analyze and create policy recommendations on how to meet our health care workforce needs in the short and long term.

Charge 2: Evaluate the effectiveness of incentives currently available to develop, attract, and retain a highly skilled health care workforce.

(7) Mayo advocates that the legislature should assess the effectiveness of the current MERC distribution of funds as a short-term recommendation for the 2014 report. Mayo has long advocated that the MERC funds should follow trainees in a more targeted fashion. While we strongly support MERC, as it currently stands, the distribution has very little to do with training physicians and other health care providers. A meaningful assessment should occur sooner rather than later so we can ensure that these dollars are targeted to truly develop, attract, and retain a highly skilled workforce.

Charge 3: Study alternative incentives to develop, attract and retain a highly skilled and diverse health care workforce.

(9) In addition to targeting loan forgiveness and loan repayment programs to primary care, we would suggest adding obstetric care training programs that are designed to encourage trainees to practice in rural and inter-urban careers. Many of our rural communities urgently require obstetric care support for the safety of mothers and infants. We would also suggest that a pathway be created to pilot these programs for other health care services that are vital to sustain rural health care such as general surgery, anesthesiology and oncology services.

(19) Mayo would urge you to expedite the analysis and projected actions in response to any state barriers that may be slowing the growth of tele-health to a short-term 2014 priority. The use of telemedicine already is and will become more critical to meeting our patient's needs, especially in rural Minnesota.

Charge 4: Identify current causes and potential solutions to barriers related to the primary care workforce....

(22) Mayo supports this recommendation and encourages the Commission to consider expanding funding opportunities to other residency training programs that are designed specifically to produce graduates who will work in rural and underserved urban communities.

(25) Mayo recommends that the Commission consider including advanced practice nursing students, physician assistant students and trainees in GME programs to this recommendation.

(27) Mayo supports this recommendation but encourages the Commission to also study the cost-effectiveness and safety of expanding the scope of practice for health care workforce professions. The institution strongly supports extended opportunities for health care professionals, but we wish to ensure that these opportunities are reviewed for their safety and efficacy in improving the health care of our Minnesota citizens.

I would be pleased to answer any questions related to my comments and welcome the opportunity to continue to engage with the Commission. Ensuring a health care workforce to meet the needs of Minnesotans long term is a critical policy discussion and Mayo Clinic stands ready to continue to assist in your efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark A. Warner". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Mark A. Warner, M.D.
Juanita Kiouss Waugh Executive Dean for Education
Walter and Leonore Annenberg Professor
Professor of Anesthesiology