

PROJECT PROFILE**Career Portfolios in Charlotte****SUMMARY**

- Hope Street Group's (HSG) Health Career Pathways Network (HCPN) is a nationwide program designed to strengthen the healthcare workforce by taking a competency-based approach to sourcing, hiring and advancing talent.
- Atrium Health is one of the leading healthcare organizations in the Southeast and one of the most comprehensive, not-for-profit systems in the country. In 2016, they became a founding member of HCPN, when it was first launched by the White House and HSG, because of their commitment to update their hiring practices and broaden their talent pool.
- Charlotte Works was selected as the backbone organization for the Charlotte region HCPN. Charlotte Works brings workforce, economic development, educational and industry partners to the same table, aligning the workforce system by strengthening partnerships, guiding policy, and promoting career pathways.
- In April 2017, HSG facilitated a Career Navigation Workshop that provided step-by-step guidance for defining and specifying the key components of demand-driven, competency-based career pathways.
- Atrium Health and Charlotte Works then worked with community partners to design a standard career portfolio for job candidates that harmonizes referral processes across the region.
- Atrium Health set the goal of hiring at least one candidate through this new process by the end of 2017. With the help of Charlotte Works, they succeeded in hiring four candidates, each referred by a different community partner, providing early evidence of the effectiveness of an aligned approach.

**AT A GLANCE**

LEAD EMPLOYER:
Atrium Health (previously
Carolinas HealthCare System)

BASED IN: Charlotte, NC

HOSPITALS: 45

CARE LOCATIONS: 900+

TOTAL TEAMMATES: 65,000

PATIENT INTERACTIONS:
12.5 million per year

MISSION: To improve health,
elevate hope and advance
healing – for all

VISION: To be the first and best
choice for care

"After developing the career portfolio with community partners and including it in our application process, the quality of the candidates improved dramatically."

MARY SPUCHES
Senior HR Consultant, Atrium Health

BACKGROUND

Atrium Health first took the initiative to join HCPN because the Charlotte region was facing the following challenges:

- Diversity amongst registered nurses at Atrium Health did not match the patient population and additionally, there was high demand, days to fill, and first-year turnover.
- Charlotte ranked 50 out of 50 large cities in economic mobility and many individuals have difficulty identifying a career path with income growth.
- Highly regulated programs in the education system, as well as a shortage of qualified instructors, limited the ability to respond to employer needs.
- In the local workforce development system, a lack of continuity between systems impeded longitudinal data collection to determine what type of interventions were effective.

To address these challenges, Atrium Health, Charlotte Works, and the community partners committed to be part of HCPN, a nationwide program designed to support individuals by advancing demand-driven, competency-based career pathways in healthcare. HCPN was launched by HSG in conjunction with the White House and the Advisory Board in April 2016 to take an employer-led approach utilizing evidence-based tools and processes to reduce job vacancies, decrease first-year turnover, increase diversity, and advance entry-level employees. Currently, there are nine HCPN regions, including Charlotte, and the network is continuing to grow.

THE STRATEGY

HSG CAREER NAVIGATION WORKSHOP

In April 2017, HSG held a workshop at Atrium Health for human resource and workforce development professionals from the hospital system and regional community partners.

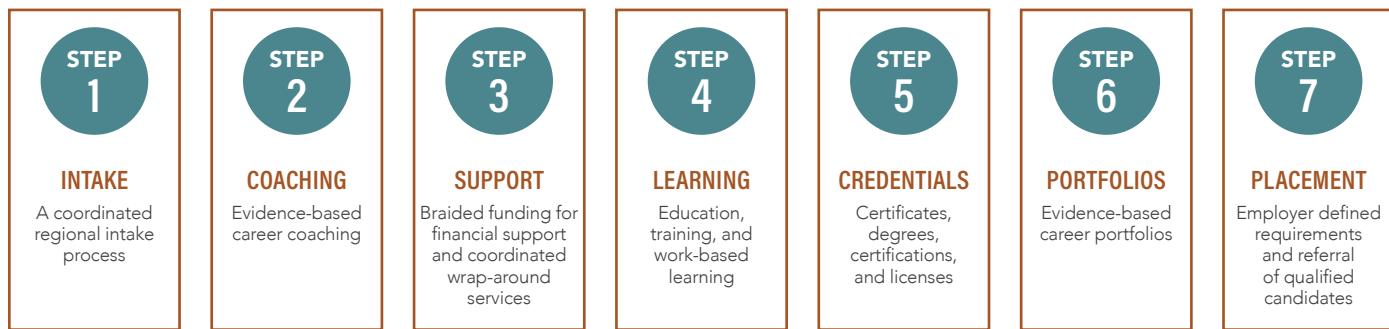
THE SEVEN STEP CAREER PATHWAY MODEL

HSG's Career Navigation Workshop focused on how to use evidence-based methods to support career navigation in a seven-step model.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS IN THE CHARLOTTE REGION

- **LEAD EMPLOYER:** Atrium Health (previously Carolinas HealthCare System)
- **BACKBONE ORGANIZATION:** Charlotte Works Workforce Development Board
- **EDUCATION PARTNERS:** Central Piedmont Community College (NextGen), Charlotte Mecklenberg Schools
- **COMMUNITY PARTNERS:** Goodwill, Dress for Success, Veterans Bridge Home, Grace-Mar, Vocational Rehab, Renaissance West Community Initiative, Mayor's Youth Employment Program, Department of Health & Human Services, Department of Social Services
- **PRIORITY JOBS:** Certified Nurse Aide, Certified Medical Assistant

The model, drawn from the Career Navigation System Guidebook, covers these essential steps in the process:



CHARLOTTE REGION ACTION PLAN

HSG's workshop enabled Atrium Health, Charlotte Works, and the community partners to focus their initial project on coordinating a regional referral process using a standardized intake checklist and standardized career portfolios for candidates. The career portfolio is an evidence-based way to frame a "social contract" between employers and community partners to define what the region will regard as a qualified candidate. The use of career portfolios reflects an awareness on the part of both community partners and individual candidates of employer-defined requirements, the referral system for qualified candidates, and employer commitments regarding qualified candidates.

Career portfolios may consist of some or all of the elements described below:



ASSESSMENTS

Documenting skills within a portfolio provides a reliable attestation of individual qualifications.



REFERENCES & BACKGROUND

Refining references and ensuring employer requirements for background checks are completed will help each individual better prepare for prospective jobs.



RESUME, COVER LETTER, & STACKABLE CREDENTIALS

These traditional tools should document the skills, abilities, and credentials that an individual brings to prospective employers.



CAREER COACHING & PATHWAYS

Each portfolio should include documented career coaching and pathway elements that illustrate long-term goals.



STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Structured interviews help individuals better prepare for and represent themselves during interviews.

Career Navigation System Guidebook 2017, National Career Pathways Technical Assistance Center.

BEST PRACTICES FROM THE CHARLOTTE REGION

Optimizing the referral process – which includes building the career portfolio, developing a checklist on intake, and distributing this information to community partners – took a significant amount of work. Atrium Health led multiple education sessions for community partners, resulting in a comprehensive portfolio of documents detailing the process. The goal throughout was to optimize the referral process so candidates were quickly and efficiently presented to hiring managers. Along the way, Atrium Health and Charlotte Works pinpointed best practices to share with the HCPN network and other health providers interested in adopting these methodologies:

- **Work in Partnership:** Develop the career portfolio in partnership with hiring managers, talent acquisition, and community partners. This allows everyone to have input into both what is necessary on the employer side and attainable by the candidates/community partners.
- **Strong Backbone Agency:** Have a strong backbone agency supporting the initiative. Charlotte Works' role as the "middle person" between the community partners and Atrium Health was critical. The Charlotte Works team has had one-on-one meetings with all of the community partners explaining the initiative and process in detail. Charlotte Works funnels all initiative-related communication and screens candidates upon referral. This creates a seamless, organized flow amongst the many different teammates involved in the work. Charlotte Works constantly works to keep the pipeline of candidates flowing by vetting and involving new community partners.
- **Develop Effective Relationships:** Develop and leverage strong relationships between hiring managers and talent acquisition. This helps to ensure hiring managers are receptive to candidates being referred on behalf of the initiative, and also ensures that hiring managers provide open and honest feedback regarding the candidates.
- **Strong Communication:** Ensure regular communication between the core groups working on the health career pathways. Weekly calls between Atrium Health and Charlotte Works proved highly productive in sustaining the initiative and relaying candidate feedback.
- **Provide Specific Feedback on Candidates:** Provide this feedback to the community partners, who can then offer targeted coaching to candidates, allowing for successful future opportunities.
- **Maintain Strong Documentation:** As the number of candidates and hires increases, it is important to have a way to identify, track, and follow up with the candidates. Return on Investment reporting and metrics tracking in the future will be critical to sustaining the program.
- **Celebrate Small Wins:** One hire can change the course of an individual's life – and the small interactions count. The Atrium Health team has personally met with each hired candidate and these interactions have made a lasting impact.



SPOTLIGHT

SUCCESS STORY: TINA

Tina moved to the Charlotte area in 2006 and completed two years at Central Piedmont Community College. She had always loved working in the medical field and had experience working in medical billing and coding, as well as medical insurance and benefits. When her sister-in-law passed away, Tina was put in charge of raising her nephew, which made her more determined to stay in the field. However, she was uncertain about how to get into a more hands-on role with more advancement opportunities, instead of being limited to administrative jobs.

Tina went to seek help at the Charlotte Works NCWorks Career Center, where she was introduced to the Pathways Program through Mr. Leon Jiles, a career advisor with the Department of Social Services. He served as her point person for everything she needed to do to get started on a new career and embark on her job search. Tina ultimately decided to try the Certified Nurse Aide (CNA) program, and Mr. Jiles supported her every step of the way. While she was in the program, she was also introduced to Mary Spuches, Senior Human Resources Consultant at Atrium Health, who built a relationship with Tina as she completed her CNA certification to ensure she was developing the skills outlined in Atrium Health's career portfolio for certified nurse assistants.

Once Tina completed and passed the CNA I program, she was offered a nurse aide position at Atrium Health in September 2017. Tina began her employment at Atrium Health with the Nursing Resource Team working in the long term care facility, Huntersville Oaks. Tina completed her CNA II certification in February 2018. Tina was then promoted to a new role and currently works in the inpatient hospital setting, which was her ultimate goal.

"I feel empowered to have this fresh start at a new career that doesn't feel like work, but more of a desire to be like extended family to the residents at the hospital."

-TINA

CONCLUSION

Atrium Health set a goal of hiring at least one candidate through this new process utilizing a career portfolio by the end of 2017. They succeeded in hiring four candidates, each referred by a different community partner, providing early evidence of the effectiveness of an aligned approach. Now, Atrium Health and Charlotte Works are working to hire additional people through this process in 2018. As seen in the Charlotte region, aligning around a coordinated approach provided candidates, who might have traditionally been left out of the selection and hiring process, with an opportunity for a job and career path.

HSG would like to thank Atrium Health, Charlotte Works, and all the organizations that have been a part of this program in the Charlotte area.



About SYNC OUR SIGNALS™

The **Health Career Pathways Network** is an industry program under Hope Street Group's flagship initiative, Sync Our Signals, which works to strengthen America's workforce by improving the signaling between employers, training providers, educators and individuals on the competencies and skills required for success in a given career path.

To learn more, visit hopestreetgroup.org and follow us on LinkedIn and Twitter @HopeStreetGroup.