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## THE HEALTH SCIENCE CAREER PATH MODEL and THE NATIONAL CONSORTIUM ON HEALTH SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION

Nancy Langley Raynor

In today's global economy, more education is required by the health care industry than ever before. In future decades, even more demand will be made of education to provide skilled health care professionals.

A major element of education reform is to provide curriculum relevance. Students who grasp relationships of what they are learning become motivated to work harder and to enroll in more rigorous courses. Students who work harder, prepare themselves better for further education and/or employment. Better prepared students exiting high school will be able to meet the challenges of the ever increasing demands of a challenging career in health care.

The National Consortium on Health Science and Technology Education has as a mission to respond to national policy on the preparation and employment of health care personnel. The purpose is to contribute to effective and efficient delivery of health care and preparation of a qualified workforce through fostering collaboration among educational agencies, the health care community, legislative and policy -making bodies, and labor. Founded in 1991, more than 30 organizations are members of NCHSTE. Their constituency represents over 800,000 potential or employed health care workers, publishers, and university/college researchers

The Consortium does not represent any single health career. Its goals include the following: 1) to promote and strengthen collaboration among health care stakeholders, 2) to respond to legislation, regulations, and initiatives (private and public) related to health science, technology education and

practice, 3) to support and influence research on health care workforce critical issues, and 4) to influence the design and delivery of education programs responsive to health care workforce needs.

The Consortium offers a variety of products and services. Among these are the National Health Care Skill Standards, The National Health Science Career Path Model, The National Health Care Skill “Core” Standards Accountability Criteria, Tools for Integration, over 160 validated integrated instructional plans (K-12) and aligned assessment modalities, Health Care Partnership Guidelines, Speakers’ Bureau, Resource Clearinghouse, National Networks, Informed Interpretation of Past, Present, and Future Initiatives; Research, Information Databases, High Performance Professional Development, Counseling and Consulting Services, NCHSTE Website, etc. (Note: In general, qualifying organizations have used Perkins fiscal resources for payment of membership.)

The NCHSTE has developed a National Health Science Career Path Model with funding from the U.S. Department of Education, the National Skills Standards Board, and the National School to Work Office. This project is entitled *Building Linkages: Integrating National Academic and National Health Care Skill Standards*. It partners educators, healthcare employers, and professional organizations’ representatives to develop and refine a healthcare career path model that will result in students leaving high school better prepared for immediate employment and/or further education. This has been accomplished by 1) providing a structure to develop awareness, exploration, orientation, and preparation opportunities for students in healthcare, 2) Organizing student goals and linking them with postsecondary education and employment opportunities (a career path, and by 3) Establishing partnerships with health care employers, public and postsecondary education and professional organizations to develop and maintain the career path. Seventeen states have been involved in the development of the Health Science Career Path Model. The Health Science Career

Path Model utilizes National Health Care Skill Standards, which are the bases for health science curriculum across the country.

Products that are currently available include 160 validated, integrated instructional plans (Kindergarten-12<sup>th</sup> grade), aligned assessment modalities, Health Care Partnership Guidelines, Integration Tools, etc. Portable skill certificates will provide evidence that students have met national competencies. In addition, a national assessment, based on the National Health Care “Core” Standards, is being built to afford students, potential employees, and employees an opportunity to add value to their career path portfolio. Assessments are projected to be ready for administration by 2002. (Note: Purchase of such products are generally considered legitimate expenditure of School to Work fiscal resources.)

For further information about the above project, or the consortium refer to the NCHSTE website: <http://NCHSTE.org> or the Consortium’s headquarters at the following address:

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