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From the President and Executive Director

Community Health Workers and Direct Support Providers: Essential Personnel to Support Individual and Population Health

The Academy/DPHA's Delaware Health Force Report, "State of the Healthcare Workforce in Delaware," provided a data-driven assessment of what many of us already suspected – we have shortages, scarcity, and in some cases an outright absence of many types of healthcare providers. The biggest issues of scarcity were found to be the worsening shortage of nurses, the continuing shortage of behavioral health providers, and a misdistribution of some types of primary care providers. The report also underscored the need for other types of personnel to be counted in Delaware.

Community Health Workers (CHWs). Known by many names (health ambassadors and advocates, navigators, promotoras, and frontline public health workers), CHWs have been around for decades in one capacity or another. Over the past couple of years, great advances—supported by the Delaware Division of Public Health—have been made to elevate the role of CHWs in our healthcare and public health landscape. As a result, Delaware now has a vital and growing [Community Health Workers Association of Delaware](#) (CHWAD). The Academy/DPHA has assisted CHWAD since the beginning, in development and expansion, by providing technical expertise and infrastructure support when requested, and preparing the way for CHWs in Delaware to be officially recognized by legislation and supported by uniform training standards.

The Academy/DPHA, in partnership with Public Health Management Corporation, has also supported multiple Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) in Delaware leveraging CHWs to engage in vaccine hesitancy work to help mitigate the COVID-19 pandemic. This Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)-funded initiative was followed by another round of HRSA funding for the establishment of an enduring infrastructure to embed CHWs in the fabric of Delaware's healthcare and public health landscape in perpetuity. There is a growing consensus, fully supported by the Academy/DPHA, that if possible, all persons working on the front lines in public health and healthcare who do not have another certification or degree could benefit from the comprehensive training provided to CHWs.

Direct Support Providers (DSPs). According to the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services, "*Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) play a pivotal role in supporting individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities to live their best lives. As an integral part of the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDDS) service system, DSPs offer specialized knowledge, skills, and values to empower the individuals they support every day.*"

Like CHWs, there is a lack of easily accessible, comprehensive, and centralized registration for DSPs. There is also little appreciation for the work of these individuals, small compensation packages for those working in this important field, and little information on the numbers and types of DSPs working in Delaware. The COVID pandemic exposed shortages of DSPs, and made a significant impact on this population and their families. While DSPs have traditionally supported Delawareans diagnosed with an Intellectual and Developmental Disorder (IDD, a population often recognized as Autistic and disabled), as the general population ages, more individuals will be diagnosed with both intellectual and physical disabilities, and need support from DSPs. This added availability of support will allow fuller participation by each individual in their social determinants of health, including meaningful employment, safe and independent housing, and a fulfilling social life.

Closing the Gap. By filling the proven healthcare worker shortage areas (including CHWs and DSPs), more Delawareans can be served and supported and have greater access to healthcare; unemployment can be substantially reduced; and Delaware will be the first in the nation for compassionate care and community engagement.

S. John Swanson, MD

President, Delaware Academy of Medicine/Delaware Public Health Association

Timothy E. Gibbs, MPH

Executive Director, Delaware Academy of Medicine/Delaware Public Health Association

Academy/DPHA Events

93rd Annual Meeting of the Delaware Academy of Medicine

Wednesday, April 26, 2023 | 6:00 - 9:00 pm
DuPont Country Club

Please join outgoing President, S. John Swanson, M.D., incoming President, Mr. Lynn C. Jones, LFACHE, and the board and staff of the Academy/DPHA at the DuPont Country Club as we honor Lolita Lopez and Westside Healthcare, hear from HRSA Workforce leader Dr. Michelle Washko, and welcome a new slate of officers and directors!

[Register and Learn More](#)



SAVE THE DATE

Parkinson's Disease Symposium
April 14, 2023
8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

University of Delaware – Clayton Hall
100 David Hollowell Drive, Newark, DE 19716



To register, scan the QR code or visit
ChristianaCare.org/ParkinsonsEvent

A FREE
community
education event
for Parkinson's Disease
patients, their caregivers
and providers.



For Students



2023 Mini Medical School

Designed for individuals who want to gain a deeper understanding of the world of medicine, Mini-Medical School is a free, virtual, six-week series of lectures for adults of all ages and high school students.

**Thursday Evenings
April 6 - May 11, 2023
7:00-8:30 pm**

Attendees will learn about important trends in diagnosing and treating illness and general health topics. Faculty will provide in-depth lectures and allow time for questions to enhance the experience. There are no tests or grades. No previous medical training is required. Participants who attend all six sessions will receive a Certificate of Achievement.

Spring 2023 Delaware Mini Medical School is co-sponsored by ChristianaCare.

[Registration opens soon.](#)



HARRINGTON & KAPLAN

PRESENTS FREE VIRTUAL MCAT PREP PROGRAM

NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS

About The Course

Harrington and the Institute for Research on Equity and Community Health at ChristianaCare is sponsoring a virtual live-on-line MCAT preparation course in collaboration with Kaplan to assist pre-medical college students from backgrounds underrepresented in medicine to successfully prepare for the MCAT.

Multiple Kaplan courses are available to accommodate the schedules of participants with summer research and internship placements.

The online Kaplan course will run Summer 2023. Students will participate in live online courses and will have access to online Kaplan MCAT resources and practice tests at zero cost.

APPLY NOW



**REGISTRATION
DEADLINE:
APR 07, 2023**

FOR MORE INFO PLEASE EMAIL : HARRINGTON@CHRISTIANACARE.ORG

Other Events

DAFP Healthcare Heroes Golf Outing

The Delaware Academy of Family Physicians (DAFP) is looking to strengthen their programs and offerings to the primary care community. To help address the concerns of primary care access and physician shortages, the DAFP Research & Education Foundation (REF) is a 501(c)(3)

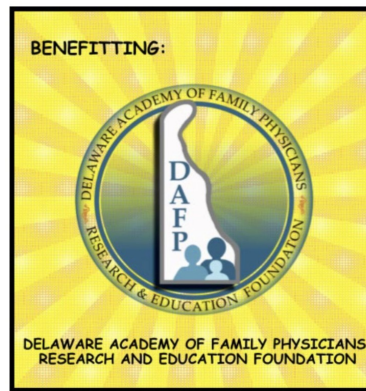
corporation and the philanthropic arm of the Delaware Academy of Family Physicians. The DAFP REF offers important programs to encourage medical students and residents to come to Delaware to explore the world of primary care and consider becoming a family physician in our state to improve access to care and provide patient education for our Delaware communities.



**DELAWARE ACADEMY OF
FAMILY PHYSICIANS**

To support these programs the DAFP Research & Education Foundation invites you to join as a golfer and/or sponsor to their 2023 DAFP Healthcare Heroes Golf Outing being held on Friday, May 12, 2023 at the White Clay Creek Country Club in Wilmington, DE. A Shotgun start will be at 10:00am.

[Learn More and Register](#)



Tax ID 51-0322328



Purchase Tickets at:
www.westsidehealth.org/gala

Additional Resources

Delaware Division of Public Health - [The DPH Bulletin](#)

Trust for America's Health: Wellness and Prevention Digest - [Subscribe](#)

Johns Hopkins Infectious Diseases COVID-19 Grand Rounds - [View Schedule](#)

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