FutureWork: Let's Get Started!

IEI's recent 31st Annual Emerging Issues Forum, FutureWork, brought together more than 1,000 business leaders, policy makers, educators, and nonprofit organizations to explore this question: As technology and demography shift, how can North Carolina prepare today to create enough good jobs for tomorrow? Forum attendees heard from thought-provoking speakers, including technology entrepreneur and scholar Vivek Wadhwa, and engaged in tabletop discussions to prioritize post-Forum strategies for action. The top three: (1) increase equity in our education system, (2) expand project-based learning opportunities, and (3) launch a statewide “Enhanced Career Pathways” public-private initiative.

For the first time in Emerging Issues Forum history, IEI hosted five concurrent sector-focused leadership hackathons on Day Two of the Forum. The healthcare sector leadership hackathon asked participants to focus on how to train enough workers with the skills necessary to meet the future healthcare demand.

Watch the FutureWork Forum here!

Why do we need to be at the forefront of health technology? Check out Vivek Wadhwa’s captivating take on opportunities for future growth.

Featured Data Source: Emerging Issues Commons

Interested in how many physicians per 10,000 people are in your county? Dig into the Emerging Issues Commons for this data and more!

How does your county rate on the Disruption Index?

Is your county more vulnerable to future jobs disruption due to automation and technology? See IEI's FutureWork Disruption Index for North Carolina and access interactive maps of your county.
Job Disruption in Healthcare?

According to IEI’s FutureWork Disruption Index for North Carolina, on average, NC counties face the potential loss of more than 25% of their current jobs and nearly 20% of current wages as a result of automation. While low-wage jobs are particularly at risk, automation is reaching up the jobs ladder to threaten many job categories.

In healthcare, tech-based platforms that aim to deliver big data insights to consumers, health professionals, and healthcare administrators are transforming the healthcare landscape, potentially radically altering patient treatment protocols and health promotion program design. As the healthcare sector continues to evolve, some current healthcare jobs may be lost as new occupations emerge. These new jobs will require an expanded healthcare workforce to meet current and future demands, and new skills will be required to navigate the combined effects of technological advances and a rapidly aging population.

Participants underscored the importance of key skills within a changing industry, including an understanding of technology, data analytics, and the ability to create meaningful insights from this data. Core foundational skills will continue to be of value, such as the ability to demonstrate clear and concise communication, work in teams and foster new collaborations, creativity, and leadership.

Healthcare FutureWork Priorities

In addition to the five strategies introduced during Day One of the Forum, session participants generated an additional four strategies specific to healthcare. These include increased healthcare technology entrepreneurship, training for team-based care, increased health literacy, and a culture shift to a patient-centered model of care delivery.
Small groups further examined seven of these strategies, ultimately designating the following three as priorities for North Carolina:

- **Enhanced Career-Pathway Initiative**

  Successful enhanced career-pathways for healthcare are seamless with on- and off-ramps that support all workers, and allow more individuals to access and obtain a good healthcare job. When it comes to secondary education, students move from grade to grade with curriculum that increases in rigor, obtaining the skills and competencies necessary to fill current and future jobs.

- **Healthcare Technology Entrepreneurship**

  A successful healthcare technology entrepreneurship ecosystem will provide better health outcomes at a lower cost, creating jobs at the same time.

- **Project-based Learning**

  Successful project-based learning programs should start as early as possible, providing students with the opportunity to shadow/intern with healthcare professionals and connect with each other to communicate ideas and think critically about their experiences. Learning is effective, scalable, transferable, and customizable—with an ultimate outcome of job placement in a health career.

While not specifically a job growth strategy, participants additionally and overwhelmingly prioritized the need to increase health literacy among North Carolinians, given health literacy’s increasing connection to positive health outcomes and efficient management of health insurance and payment options.

**Next Steps**

By the Forum’s close, numerous session participants offered their personal commitment to take action on the healthcare priorities identified. Thanks to generous support from the Duke Energy Foundation, IEI is already planning post-Forum programming that includes community forums in each of North Carolina’s eight Prosperity Zones. Stay tuned for additional updates on post-Forum work, and learn how you can participate, by clicking here.

Sincerely,

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