

INTEGRATING WORKFORCE INVESTMENTS WITH BUSINESS IMPACT:

HOW NORTON HEALTHCARE IS MAKING THE CASE
FOR ADVANCING ITS FRONTLINE WORKERS' SKILLS AND CAREERS

By Dr. Randall Wilson

Norton Healthcare of Louisville, KY, the region's leading healthcare provider, has been nationally recognized as a standard for delivering and measuring quality care. Driving this leadership is deep investment in the growth and development of their staff—a “culture of continual, lifelong learning”—and commitment to the Metro Louisville’s “cradle-to-career” education strategy. Investing over \$11 million a year in staff education and development, their transformational approach to workforce development integrates their strategic priorities with programs based on assessment and forecasts of staffing needs, data analysis, internal and external partnerships, and quantifiable measures of the impact their investments have on their business.

This combined approach to quality care, workforce development, and analytic capacity is no accident: the three are closely related and

Norton stands as a model of sustainable learning and career growth for a healthcare employer's frontline workforce.

mutually supportive. While not unique in this approach, Norton's integration of it represents an organizational best practice and stands as a model of sustainable learning and career growth for a healthcare employer's frontline workforce.

The Norton Healthcare case study is the first in CareerSTAT's business practice series on how healthcare employers measure the impact of their investments on frontline workers. This study documents Norton Healthcare's approach to workforce programs and measurement with a focus on how analysis of their workforce needs influenced decision making and investment goals, and consequently deepened its reliance on data to inform planning and program development.

Presented here to inform healthcare employers, workforce practitioners and others interested in starting, scaling and sustaining frontline workforce programs of their own, **the study explores the ways leading healthcare organizations around the country use frontline investments to improve six key business metrics:**

- › Workforce Availability
- › Employee Competency and Advancement
- › Employee Engagement
- › Patient Experience
- › Community Impact and Quality
- › Safety

As a Frontline Healthcare Worker Champion recognized for sustained investment in advancing the skills and careers of entry-level workers, Norton appears in the CareerSTAT *Guide to Investing in Frontline Healthcare Workers* for demonstrating programmatic and organizational best practices.

NORTON HEALTHCARE'S STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Deliver Highest Quality Care

An integrated approach to investing in frontline staff and measuring its impact on business begins with a statement of purpose—a goal. Norton Healthcare's ultimate goal is founded on its mission "to provide quality healthcare to all those we serve, in a manner that responds to the needs of our communities and honors our faith heritage." Reinforcing that mission is the determination to make Norton Healthcare the "preferred place to be" for patients, family members, and healthcare professionals that reflects the diversity of Louisville's population.

President and CEO Russell F. Cox stresses the importance of all staff, including frontline employees, knowing their roles in achieving the organization's goals. If Norton is to be the safest place for healthcare, for example, all workers—from environmental services to physicians—must understand and fulfill their specific role in providing exceptional care. Optimizing a worker's commitment depends on access to the results of his or her efforts, which requires leadership to share the data and methods used to measure it (like patient satisfaction surveys and employee engagement surveys, for example).

Norton
Healthcare
is an inte-



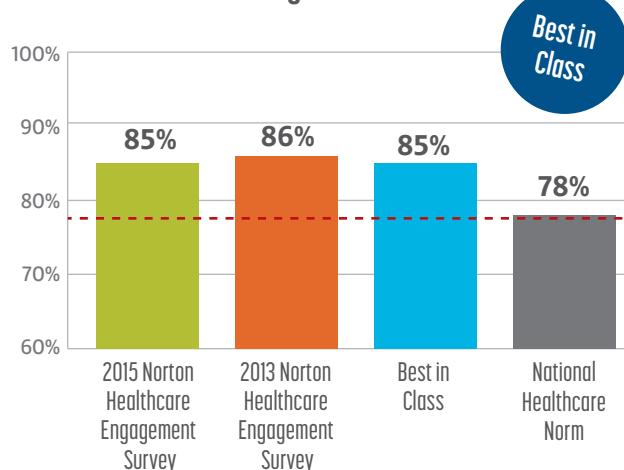
**NORTON
HEALTHCARE**

grated, faith-based system providing care at more than 250 locations throughout Greater Louisville and Southern Indiana. The Louisville-based not-for-profit system includes five Louisville hospitals with 1,837 licensed beds, seven outpatient centers, 13 Norton Immediate Care Centers, more than 14,000 employees, more than 600 physicians and approximately 2,000 providers in Norton Medical Group on its medical staff. Nearly half (44 percent) of Norton's employees are frontline workers like nursing assistants, transporters, medical billers and coders, and dietary and environmental service staff.

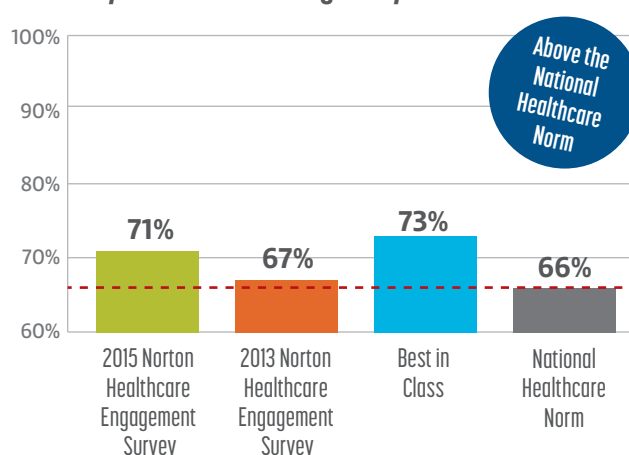
Frontline workers shape our reputation and deliver our mission. Preparing them for success is critical to the organization's success.

—Russell F. Cox
President and CEO

Opportunity to Improve My Professional Knowledge and Job Skills



My Leader Encourages My Career Growth



RATES FROM EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT SURVEYS SHOW THAT FRONTLINE EMPLOYEES AT NORTON HEALTHCARE FEEL MORE SUPPORTED AND ENCOURAGED TO GROW THAN COMPETITORS.

Create a Culture of Learning

Norton Healthcare's mission and strategy thus depend on a culture of continuous learning and opportunity. Former CEO Stephen Williams knows the power of this culture firsthand: "My commitment to advancement in the workplace is personal. I began working in healthcare as an orderly while in high school, joining Norton Healthcare 37 years ago. Our employees are by far our biggest asset. I want our valued employees to have the same opportunity and support I did in growing their Norton Healthcare career."¹

This culture of learning and development is expressed to staff during hiring, onboarding, and throughout their employment. Norton works to make employment there "sticky" by encouraging staff loyalty and enthusiasm, and they do it with workforce development programs, career advancement opportunities, personal support, competitive compensation, and benefits. As System Vice President of Mission and Outreach Ronald C. Oliver, Ph.D., BCC, puts it, "We tell employees that we hope that this is your career home. From GED to PhD, we have the resources to help you."

For President Cox, what differentiates Norton's approach to workforce investment is that "we look at it as a strategy," rather than viewing it narrowly as a set of programs or initiatives. Dana Cook-Pearson,

“We know that the people we invest in become loyal, dedicated, long-term employees.”

—Tony Bohn

Chief Human Resource Officer

a frontline manager in Health Information Management, echoes this view. After participating in a successful effort to upgrade her group's skills and help them pass a required certification exam, she is pursuing a bachelor's degree for herself: at Norton, says Cook-Pearson, "learning is contagious."

Norton's commitment goes past the careers of their employees and extends to the wellbeing of their families. For example, Norton's Caring Tree Program assisted 330 employees by providing for their families at Christmas, including a total of 829 children. Approximately 600 Norton Healthcare leaders donated time and funds to plan, purchase, and deliver gifts, food, and clothing.

In addition, Norton's Employee Emergency Relief Fund provides financial assistance for unforeseen expenses to cover medical bills, property damages, additional child and dependent care costs, or other

events on a case-by-case basis. Overall, the goal is to provide employees with wraparound services that support both professional and personal needs.



1. Randall Wilson and Kelly Aiken, *Guide to Investing in Frontline Healthcare Workers* (Washington, DC: National Fund for Workforce Solutions; Jobs for the Future: Boston, MA, 2016), 15.

NORTON HEALTHCARE'S WORKFORCE PROGRAMS

Norton Healthcare has an extensive and wide-ranging portfolio of programs for investing in employee education and advancement. While other leading healthcare employers have made similar investments, Norton's approach is both strategic and comprehensive.² Over time, the learning strategy as well as the scope and scale of workforce investment have evolved in response to changing organizational priorities and to data analysis that clarified the workforce needs.

Today's workforce and educational strategies trace their origins to 2000, when Norton first instituted a workforce development function to improve employee engagement and fill entry- and mid-level positions. Perhaps more pressing was a directive from Norton's board to reduce the \$1 million-per-month cost of "travelers"—temporary nurses hired to fill vacancies in those positions. At the time, the focus of employee financial aid programs was on building a nursing pipeline—the nascence of what would become a "Norton Healthcare Scholar."

Then, in 2009, leadership in Human Resources began the process of realigning their workforce development strategy from a "transactional" function to one that was "transformative." For Tony Bohn, Chief Human Resources Officer, this meant "knocking down the silos" between workforce development and talent acquisition—aligning workforce investments with the organization's need to attract, develop, and retain talent in the hospitals and primary-care practices. It required new infrastructure to better select and track their workforce investments, which meant going beyond processing requests for tuition assistance, to utilizing the scholarship program to help employees attain the degrees and credentials needed to fill critical vacancies and grow a robust talent pipeline.

Norton Healthcare's comprehensive approach to career development relies on the work of the Office of Workforce Development, Norton University, and the Institute for Nursing.

Norton Healthcare Career Development Model



2. For examples, see Wilson and Aiken, *Guide to Investing in Frontline Healthcare Workers*.

1. Office of Workforce Development (est. 2000)

To guide frontline worker advancement and build a pipeline of professionals, Norton's Office of Workforce Development set up a *career center* and a staff of six coaches to assess workers' skills and interests, and to provide career advice and financial assistance. Led by Director Christy Ralston, the coaches speak with employees about their career goals and explain alternative paths and potential barriers and ways to remove them. Those seeking tuition assistance are required to discuss their plans first with career coaches.

The *Norton Healthcare Scholar Program* invests \$5 million annually to support acquisition of credentials by current and future Norton employees. Candidates are eligible for up to \$24,000 per degree or certification. At any given time, 750 current or future employees benefit from tuition payments made in advance of their coursework, thus avoiding out-of-pocket expenses. Since the program's inception, over 6,000 students—three-fourths of them frontline employees—have received educational support, and 1,350 working students are coached annually.

The Office of Workforce Development collaborates with *Norton's Talent Acquisition* staff, business centers within its facilities, and regional educational

providers to develop new education and training programs in specific occupational areas, such as medical lab technologist and acute care patient care assistant. It recently recruited an *Academic Workforce Liaison* to help align and bridge high school curriculum and pathways to healthcare-related college degrees. In addition, Workforce Development partners with higher education providers, Louisville's schools, and local government to attract young people to health careers, and participates actively in the Mayor's *SummerWorks* program.

2. Norton University (est. 2006)

Under the leadership of Al Cornish, Norton's Chief Learning Officer, Norton University programs aim to give every employee the skills needed to do their work effectively. Its *in-house educational programming* ranges from training in medical interpretation to continuing medical education for physicians.

Frontline workers who need preparation for further study can participate in *School at Work®*, a blended learning, basic skills program that combines online learning with onsite instruction. They can also participate in *Elevating the Front Line Employee*, a program designed to remove barriers to success and career advancement for entry-level workers—including help with financial planning and work readiness.

Elevating Frontline Employees Curriculum

Professional

Business Protocol and Attire
How to Build a Résumé
Mock Interview Sessions
Basic Computer Literacy

Introduction to "Budgeting Can be Fun"
Dave Ramsey's Smartdollar®
The ABC's of Retiring
Norton Healthcare Benefits

Financial

Personal

N Good Health
Personal Resilience and Renewal
Individualized Career Coaching
Norton Healthcare Career Development Program

Courses in leadership development (like *So You Want to Be a Leader?*) give frontline supervisors the opportunity to shadow an experienced leader. A similar program customized for Norton Medical Group enhances the leadership skills of over 600 primary-practice managers, supervisors, coordinators, and team leaders. In all, Norton University offers both instructor-led and self-paced online training as well as online examinations. Over 37,000 continuing education credits were offered in 2015.

3. Institute for Nursing (est. 2010)

A National League of Nursing Center of Excellence, the Institute of Nursing at Norton Healthcare provides continuing education and career advancement for 4,500 nursing professionals at

all levels of the system. For example, its *Academic Practice Partnership* collaborates with the University of Kentucky to promote those with bachelor of science degrees in nursing (BSN) to doctorates in nursing practice. The partnership—originally formed to serve Norton Healthcare’s strategic need for advanced practice nurses in both acute and primary care and across the continuum of services—was also designed to retain the BSN-prepared nurses who were turning over after three to five years in the organization. The Institute also works in collaboration with the Office of Workforce Development to support associate degree nurses in obtaining their bachelor degree. More broadly, the Institute works with hospitals throughout the region to promote clinical education and professional development.

Building the Region’s Healthcare Workforce

Norton Healthcare’s internal workforce achievements have inspired initiatives to align education and training with healthcare needs at the regional level. It was instrumental in launching the Health Careers Collaborative of Greater Louisville, a regional industry partnership. Alongside nine other healthcare employers in the region, Norton helped formed the collaborative with education and community partners to support recruitment of a healthcare workforce and the development of pathways. The Collaborative advises on common educational projects, such as the creation of stackable credentials and new health professional programs, including Medical Laboratory Technology and Acute Care Nursing Assistant. Created by Collaborative partners, the Kentucky Health Career Center (KHCC) draws on best practices of Norton’s own career center and is one of two sector-focused career centers funded by the area’s public workforce system, KentuckianaWorks. KHCC offers resources and services

for people seeking jobs and wanting to advance in healthcare, and for companies looking to hire or retain skilled employees. Norton worked with other healthcare organizations to advise on the selection of a center operator, programming, and performance metrics. The Center’s “Career Calculator” is a web-based application that culls employment statistics and job-posting data to inform users about potential career pathways and validates the importance of workforce analytics to KHCC endeavors.³

3. Sri Ravipati, “Online Calculator Helps Louisville Students Choose Career Paths,” *THE Journal*, December 16, 2016, thejournal.com/articles/2016/12/16/online-calculator-helps-louisville-students-choose-career-paths.aspx.



BUILDING NORTON'S CAPACITY FOR FORECASTING AND IMPACT ANALYSIS

A chief obstacle in transforming Norton Healthcare's workforce programs from a collection of programs into an integrated strategy was a lack of data on their investments' impact on strategic priorities. While workforce programming in its first decade (2000-2010) was substantial, it was not evidence-based. Data on student aid requests was collected but not analyzed with an eye to strategy or future workforce needs. Neither were there measures nor criteria to guide that analysis. As Bohn observes, "what's measured gets improved." To remedy this, Human Resources and Talent Acquisition leadership set out to improve their analytic capacity.

“The beauty of Norton Healthcare is where you start in the organization is just that—your starting point. You decide where you want to end up.”

—Russell F. Cox
President and CEO

Two major priorities drove Norton to invest in data analytics:

1. The need to evaluate Norton Healthcare Scholar programs and clarify per program costs and outcomes in order to redesign and better target tuition aid; and
2. The need for a streamlined, employee-friendly data system to better expedite tuition aid reimbursements, access transcripts, and enable employees to manage their account.

To accomplish this, they would hire an analyst and design a tool to make smarter, more strategic workforce investments to guide workforce development decisions less by hindsight (How many students did we assist?) and more in real time (What are our workforce needs now, what will they be, and how should we invest in meeting them?).

Jackie Beard, System Director for Talent Acquisition and Workforce Development, hired Nick Nethery as Norton's first Talent Acquisition and Workforce Development Analyst. Together, Beard and Nethery designed a tool that would use an employee database to answer important workforce planning questions.



They distilled more than 1,300 job titles into “job families”—groups of jobs that involved similar types of work and required similar training, skills, knowledge, and expertise.⁴ They then devised the metrics to analyze data by employee head count, age ranges, potential retirements, vacancy rates, turnover, time-to-fill positions, and employee engagement.

The tool was designed to allow “drill downs” into particular occupations or job families, such as critical care nursing or medical lab technologies, to generate reports to inform managers’ decision making. There are plans for the tool to analyze additional data like workers’ educational attainment, the skills required for different job families, and patient satisfaction scores.

The tool and the analytics function have grown through trial and error and have expanded to monitor staffing levels, vacancies, and turnover. Quarterly reports now predict retirements and other staffing metrics by job family. The analytics team works with leaders in Norton’s Talent Acquisition and Workforce Development business units to inform program decisions. While analysis can be complicated and fine-grained, concise reports that summarize

“Our analytics easily make the case for investment. There is clear correlation between our commitment and our employee’s loyalty, but financial ROI is only one benefit. The real return is in employee engagement, self-fulfillment, and self-actualization of the people working with patients and families.”

—**Russell F. Cox**
President and CEO



high-level findings have opened executive leaders’ eyes to the potential of data to improve proactive analytics and real-time decision-making.

To meet growing data demands from managers and leaders, Norton recently centralized its data analytics function by creating a Workforce Analytics Department with three Senior Workforce Analysts, two Workforce Analysts, and a Workforce Analytics Coordinator. This allows Workforce Analytics to work with internal customer across silos to develop and support systems, applications, and reports to measure impact and trend key people data to support the organization’s business strategies.

An example of a key interactive, internally built, web-based application, supported by Workforce Analytics is the Career Center Management Tool. Career coaches can input assessments and other data on individual employees to help track career development and process requests for tuition assistance from the Norton Healthcare Scholars program. The tool also features a dashboard with individual student data and enables the Center to manage things like career-coaching requests and visits. By design, Workforce Analytics uses student data, tuition expenses, and degree efforts for analytical reporting, trending, and forecasting.

4. “Compensation: Job Families,” Massachusetts Institute of Technology, hrweb.mit.edu/compensation/job-evaluations/job-families.

IMPLEMENTING PROGRAMS AND COMMUNICATING IMPACT

Since the advent of the Workforce Analytics effort in 2011, Norton Healthcare has become increasingly intentional in its use of both quantitative and qualitative data to inform workforce decision making, and communicate organizational and individual outcomes. Analytical findings help assess the impact of current investments—like coaching and the Norton Healthcare Scholars program—and to identify any needs for new programs or modifications to existing ones. Qualitative data and individual stories demonstrate how these programs change lives and create more engaged employees. Below are specific examples that illustrate the impact of Norton's "grow your own" approach to workforce development, and the wedding of analysis and strategic priorities.

Norton Healthcare Scholars and Tuition Assistance

Since its inception, over 6,100 Norton employees have benefited from the Norton Healthcare Scholars

program. Data bear out the program's contribution to a robust talent pipeline and improvements in staff retention. Over a five-year period, the average retention of incumbent employees who received tuition assistance toward nursing degrees increased at a much higher rate (88 percent) than new, nonscholar nursing graduates (73 percent) and experienced nurses (61 percent). Data showed that nearly 9 in 10 (86 percent) of frontline employee 2014-15 Norton Scholars who earned credentials earned promotions, and 99 percent of those receiving upfront tuition payments completed the semester's work.

Analytics clarified the limits of the tuition assistance model. Data on loan defaults and on students matriculating in disciplines not in demand at Norton Healthcare led to program changes including certified coaching and career path discussions before providing financial assistance to students. Further, analysis made the case for broadening the goals

Average Retention Rate over a Five-year Period

88%

future and current employees
who received tuition assistance
toward nursing degrees

73%

new, nonscholar
nursing graduates

61%

experienced
nurses

86%

frontline employee
2014-15 Norton Scholars
who earned credentials
earned promotions

99%

Norton Scholars
receiving upfront tuition
payments completed
the semester's work

While **SAILE DAVIS** always knew that she wanted to become a Registered Nurse, she couldn't have anticipated the path she took to achieve her goal. Davis started as a traditional student enrolled in a nursing program, but when her student visa expired she had to put her education on hold for 10 years. During this time, she focused on work and started as a Patient Care Associate



at Norton Healthcare. She loved the clinical environment and the ability to work directly with patients, but she wanted to take on more responsibility and found a way to work and pursue her dream. Utilizing Norton's career pathways and extensive education supports, Davis returned to her goal of becoming an RN. Using Norton Scholars program, Davis started as a nurse extern and is now working as a nurse apprentice. The program helps her balance her full-time nursing classes with the work experience to prepare her to succeed on the job. With her goal in sight, Davis is focusing on giving back and looking forward. Now a resident and citizen, Davis leads the Bellarmine Student Nurse Association, mentors other nursing students, and is planning for a master's degree to specialize in neonatal care. Davis has graduated in May 2017 and is starting her career as a BSN, RN with Norton Healthcare.

of tuition aid and other workforce programs: Once concentrated in nursing, recent programs foster credential attainment and programming along a range of important occupations including allied health and information technology fields.

Elevating Frontline Employees

Norton Healthcare's workforce investments touch employees and community residents in many ways.

Data showed that 69 percent of the first cohort in 2014's six-month Elevating Frontline Employees program earned promotion and higher wages. In less tangible ways, employees who participate in the program express appreciation for the strong support provided by fellow employees and career coaches as they chart their path to new opportunities at Norton.

Laboratory Technologists

Norton's lab operations didn't know the severity of a looming workforce problem until the analytics team, using Norton's forecasting tool, uncovered pending retirement by a wave of their laboratory technologists. Fine-grained analysis of staff age levels revealed that up to 40 percent of laboratory staff could retire over the next five years and that most technicians, a high percentage of them more than 60 years old, could age out within 10 years. (Many had deferred retirement during the recession.) These findings led senior leadership, clinical and pathology laboratory managers, workforce, and talent acquisition leaders to develop career ladders for associate-level medical lab technicians to advance and populate a talent pipeline in the field. To support internal growth and recruitment of bachelor's degree-holding technicians, laboratory and workforce staff convened employers and educators in the region's newly formed workforce partnership, Health Careers Collaborative of Greater Louisville,





to standardize titles and professional requirements, and expand capacity for degree programs and clinical experience. Norton also developed a training program of its own to offer other lab certifications. This anticipated shortage led to the development of an overall strategy that lessened the severity of the problem and equipped Norton to manage similar situations in the future.

Diagnostic Imaging

As a result of local schools producing more radiology technician graduates than the employment market demanded, Norton's Diagnostic Imaging Department had limited full-time job vacancies. Analytics' review of workforce data revealed a higher volume of per diem staff and increased first-year turnover in new graduate technicians. The saturated market was forcing some new graduate technicians (including several Norton Scholars radiology students) to consider per diem positions, with varying hours and lacking benefits, while seeking out other full-time employment opportunities. With this information, the analytics team worked with Imaging leadership to select key, high-need occupations, including radiological and CAT scan technicians, to support conversion of per diem positions to full-time permanent. The improved strategy realigned the staffing mix with budget-neutral costs to the business unit and reduced first-year turnover in technicians.

Health Information Management (HIM)

Systems managers in HIM needed to upgrade the skills for certain occupations to implement

ANDRE MARTIN, an environmental associate at Norton Children's Hospital who was eager to grow his career, sought employment at Norton because of its reputation as "an organization that offers you options."

Working with a career coach in the Office of Workforce Development, Martin participated in the six-month Elevating Frontline Employees program



where he was encouraged to reflect on his goals, develop a résumé, learn more about budgeting and personal finance, and practice good health habits. Shortly after finishing the program, Martin was promoted to Patient Care Associate and found that it was not a good fit. He worked with his leader and career coach to explore other roles in the organization where he applied and internally transferred to a patient transport role within the same hospital. As Martin develops his career plan, he feels strongly that, "If you lack education to qualify for a job, Norton will work with you to get what you need."

transition to the use of electronic health records (EHRs). To work effectively and help physicians adapt to EHRs, incumbent medical transcriptionists (whose work would be phased out by the transition) needed training to become Registered Health Information Technicians with knowledge of data use, medical terminology, and experience with the new technology. To meet this priority, HIM managers worked with the Office of Workforce Development to identify an educational provider and develop an on-the-job certification program with tuition discounts, credit for prior learning, and onsite clinicals. All 11 students who enrolled in the program, including System Manager Dana Cook-Pearson, graduated with academic honors and retained their jobs.

NORTON HEALTHCARE'S BEST PRACTICES

As this case demonstrates, Norton's integrated approach to workforce development, data analytics and quality care did not emerge overnight. Its 16-year evolution reflects experimentation and adaptation to changing conditions and needs, as well as their historic commitment to their staff and the surrounding community. As a model of sustainable learning and career growth, particularly for frontline workers, Norton offers lessons learned and best practices for interested healthcare providers.

Align with Organizational Priorities and Goals. The ideal of lifelong learning and career growth is realized and sustained when organizational goals and strategy drive workforce investment, and investments reflect careful analysis and measurement. Norton has sustained the work because their integrated approach creates a "virtuous circle": strategic investment in the workforce, guided by data analysis, creates better outcomes and deepens the case for analytic capacity to monitor workforce development needs and opportunities for investment, as well as the impacts of the investment. This capacity strengthens the case to leadership for further workforce investment while helping them update or realign organizational needs and priorities. As System Director of Talent Acquisition and Workforce Development Jackie Beard observes, "Data from Workforce Analytics empowers Norton's decision makers by proactively shedding light on potential critical talent needs," and whether workforce programs are meeting them.

■ ■ Data from Workforce Analytics empowers Norton's decision makers by proactively shedding light on potential critical talent needs. ■ ■

—Jackie Beard

System Director of Talent Acquisition
and Workforce Development



Promote Workforce Development as a Business Strategy. Key to Norton Healthcare's learning culture is the insistence, from the CEO on down, that all employees understand organizational goals and how their work contributes to meeting them. Workforce Analytics reflects and reinforces this culture; for Senior Analyst Nick Nethery, "the strategic plan guides everything," especially the design of workforce initiatives and the metrics to gauge their success. Just as important as data and metrics are the stories that communicate and personalize organizational priorities and employee success.

Engage Senior Leadership. Senior leader support has been critical to Norton Healthcare's integrated approach, both in creating its comprehensive suite of workforce programs and in sustaining them. Findings from Analytics—forecasting needs, tracking openings, assessing program impacts—keep workforce issues paramount on leaders' agendas and demonstrate, through monthly and quarterly reports as well as presentations tailored to specific requests, the value of continued investment. Both Analytics and Workforce staff, including coaches, cultivate relationships with managers in Human Resources and in the various business units throughout Norton Healthcare.

Invest in Infrastructure. As Chief Human Resources Officer Tony Bohn notes, a decade ago Norton had notable workforce programs such as tuition assistance, but lacked systems and structures dedicated to frontline-workforce development. Creating and staffing an Office of Workforce Development that reports to a Human Resource leader gave the health system the capacity to invest in the front line strategically. Dedicating a position to Workforce Analytics and designing the forecasting tool further expanded this capacity and accelerated the shift from a “transactional” to a “transformative” approach to workforce development and measurement. As a dedicated business unit, Norton’s Office of Workforce Development helps employees explore and advance their careers and, at the same time, ensures that organizational investments have the greatest impact.

Incremental Approach to Workforce Analytics. While analytics require investment, it can be developed incrementally by training internal staff and adapting templates already in use. Beginning with a set of carefully chosen measures and flash points, such as the aging of laboratory technicians cited above, gave Workforce Analytics the opportunity to improvise and gain expertise. In the five years since its advent, Norton’s Workforce Analytics group has expanded its capacity with new variables and reporting methods, adding staff and building closer connections with managers and staff in the system’s Human Resources, business

Norton’s Office of Workforce Development helps employees explore and advance their careers and at the same time ensures that organizational investments have the greatest impact.

units, and information technology units. In parallel with the added capacity, the Office of Workforce Development grew from a single employee to the staff needed to expand programmatic scope.

Co-Investment with Partners. Norton Healthcare, its community partners and other healthcare employers have invested the time and resources needed to give low-skilled individuals in Louisville access to training, education, entry-level jobs, and career pathways in the industry. The Kentucky Health Career Center’s investment in the community mirrors Norton’s workforce development strategy: offer people access to career coaching, assessment, training and education programs. This collaborative investment reflects a shared understanding of community needs and commitment to the city’s “Cradle to Career” goal to align resources for maximum impact.

Advancing frontline workers helps healthcare organizations do good and do well. As proven by Norton Healthcare, frontline investments transform workers’ lives and help organizations meet critical business metrics and quality goals.

CareerSTAT, a national network of healthcare leaders, is committed to helping more organizations develop programs, infrastructure, and culture to advance their frontline workforce by offering peer learning opportunities and resources to organizations just starting or scaling their own frontline investments. Supporting almost two dozen healthcare partnerships in 20 communities, CareerSTAT’s Frontline Healthcare Worker Champions roster of successful programs and organizations documents best practices in the *Guide to Investing in Frontline Healthcare Workers*; it hosts an Employer Academy and offers technical assistance to organizations to develop, implement, scale, and measure frontline investments.

TheJoyceFoundation

This research was supported by the Joyce Foundation. We thank them for their support but acknowledge that the findings and conclusions presented in this report are those of the authors alone, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Joyce Foundation.



CareerSTAT and the authors of this report thank leaders and frontline staff of Norton Healthcare for their invaluable contribution to this report. The authors would like to especially thank Tony Bohn, Jackie Beard, Christy Ralston, and Nick Nethery for discussing their roles and responsibilities as well as the programs and culture of Norton Healthcare.



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CareerSTAT would like to thank Dr. Randall Wilson, Associate Research Director, Jobs for the Future for his research and completion of this report.