



IMPRINT



Strengthening Rhode Island:

A Case Study in Economic Development through Skilled Immigrants

Today's Presenters



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AGENDA

- 1) IMPRINT: skilled immigrant issue overview
- 2) The national Welcome Back Initiative
- 3) Case study: Rhode Island skilled immigrant advancement
 - Getting started
 - Achievements
 - Challenges and lessons learned
- 4) Questions and discussion on implementing ideas in your communities

IMPRINT

... is a **national umbrella group** of nonprofits supporting professional re-entry of **underemployed skilled immigrants**

- Creates and disseminates resources
- Advocates for effective policies
- Broadcasts best practices

www.imprintproject.org

Who are skilled immigrants in the U.S.?

- 30% of all immigrants hold a B.A. or higher
- 2 million + are underemployed, at higher rates than U.S.-born (22% versus 16%)
- More likely to have bachelor's degrees than U.S.-born in shortage fields of healthcare, STEM, and IT
- Advanced degree holders (masters or higher):
 - Paid \$22,500 in taxes, used <\$3,000 in benefits in 2009
 - 100 immigrant jobs are associated with 44 new jobs

Why this issue?

- ✓ Non-partisan
- ✓ An economic development opportunity
- ✓ Leverages another country's prior investment
- ✓ Connects to the global economy
- ✓ Helps satisfy diverse consumers



Photo courtesy of Welcoming America

Other benefits of skilled immigrants joining the professional workforce

- ✓ Meets employer talent needs
- ✓ Sparks job creation
- ✓ Improves tax revenue
- ✓ Fosters economic independence for families
- ✓ Relieves low-skills job crowding



Donut Maker... or IT pro?

Common barriers for white-collar immigrants

- Loss of professional networks
- Lack of information about:
 - Career pathways
 - Transferring credentials
 - U.S. standards for resumes, interviews
 - American workplace culture
- Licensing barriers
- Unprepared public workforce system
- Lack of English classes
- Employer misperceptions



The Welcome Back Initiative:

Improving diversity in the healthcare workforce



Mission:

Build a bridge between the need for more culturally and linguistically diverse health professionals and the untapped resource of immigrants trained in a field of health in their country of origin who are living in the US.

Presence:

California

Colorado

Maryland

Massachusetts

New York

Rhode Island

Washington

Texas

Why?

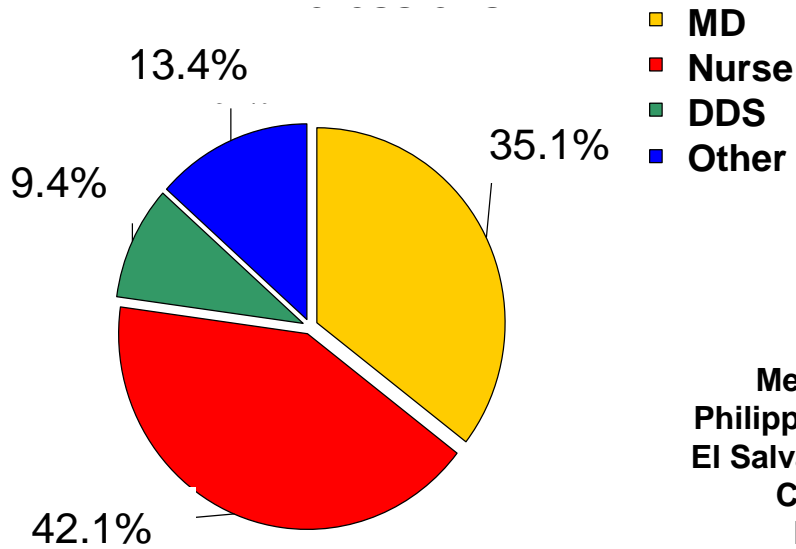


“The lack of minority health professionals is compounding the nation’s persistent racial and ethnic health disparities.”

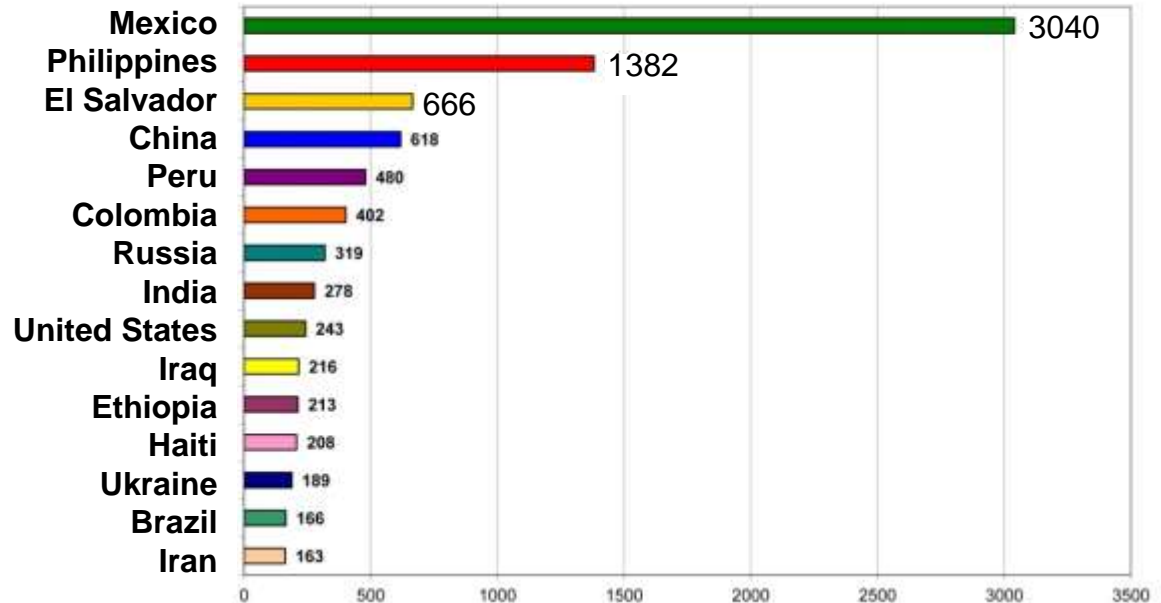
(Sullivan Commission, Sept. 04)



Who do we serve?



Where do they come from?



Demographics...

- 64% percent NOT working in healthcare at first contact
- 46% have been in the US < 3 years
- 71% are women
- 60% are 30 to 49 years old
- 56% have intermediate to high level of English
- 36% have at least 1 dependent in the US



CASE STUDY: Strengthening Rhode Island



The RI Welcome Back Center: Getting Started

- 2006: RIPLA (RI Professional Latino Association) highlights the need for services to immigrant professionals in the state
- 2008: Incorporation of national Welcome Back Initiative model in Rhode Island at Dorcas Place Adult and Family Learning Center in Providence



The RI Welcome Back Center Today: *Program Offerings*

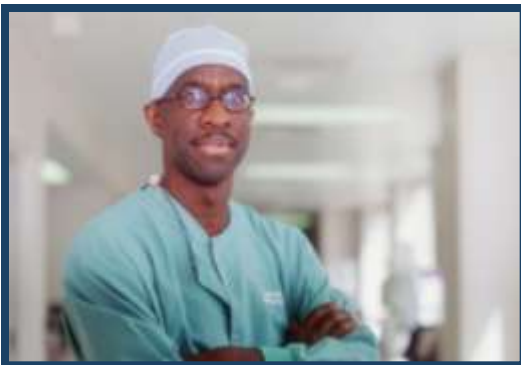
- Educational case management
- Career pathway planning
- Licensing orientation
- Support for credentials and licenses
- English: English Health Train, TOEFL prep
- Clinical exposure and internship opportunities
- Acculturation to the US health care system workshops
- Employer networking
- Advocacy to remove policy barriers



The RI Welcome Back Center Today: *Achievements by the Numbers*

*The Welcome Back Center at Dorcas Place currently serves **509** internationally-trained professionals*

- Average 318% salary increase
- 103 participants have re-entered the health care field
- 72 professionals have improved their English proficiency
- 19 professionals have passed licensing exams
- 86 professionals have had their credentials evaluated



The RI Welcome Back Center 2012 Funding

- Rhode Island Foundation
- AMGEN
- RIDE
- Blue Cross Blue Shield of RI
- Robert Stoico First Fed
- Governor's Workforce Board
- Ida Ballou Littlefield Fund
- Fish Family Foundation
- Verizon Foundation
- Stride Memorial Fund
- WBC Sustaining Partnership Fund

**Total Budget
for Program
= \$310,420**



RI-WBC: Operations

- Management
- Direct Services
- Data collection and management



Partnerships

Advisory Council, 3 subcommittees:

- Fund Development
- Participant Services
- *Public Policy and Advocacy*



Partnerships *cont...*

- RI Department of Education, Office of Adult Education
- RI Professional Latinos Association
- Stepping Up Consortium of Women and Infants Hospital, Rhode Island Hospital (RIH) the United Nurses and Allied Professionals (UNAP) and RIH/UNAP Healthcare Education Trust
- Ocean State Hispanic Nurses Association
- Center for Health Professionals
- RI Office of Higher Education and affiliated public institutions: Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI), the University of Rhode Island (URI) and Rhode Island College
- Blackstone Valley Community Health Care
- RI Adult Education Professional Development Center
- Making Connections Providence/Annie E. Casey Foundation
- RI Department of Health
- The Rhode Island Foundation
- Chinese Nurses Association
- Latino College Access Coalition
- RI State Nurses Association
- RI Medical Society
- The RI Free Clinic
- The Hope Clinic / Clinica Esperanza
- Home Front Health Care
- Hospital Association of RI
- RI GWB
- NRI AHEC
- RI DLT
- H & R Block



Achievements: Advisory Council

- Sustaining Partnership Fund
- Community Resource Service Plan
- Advocacy strategy and position paper to remove a regulatory barrier for foreign-trained nurses
- Resource and Fund Development initiative



Public Policy and Advocacy Subcommittee: Key to Nurse Licensing Reform Campaign

Charge:

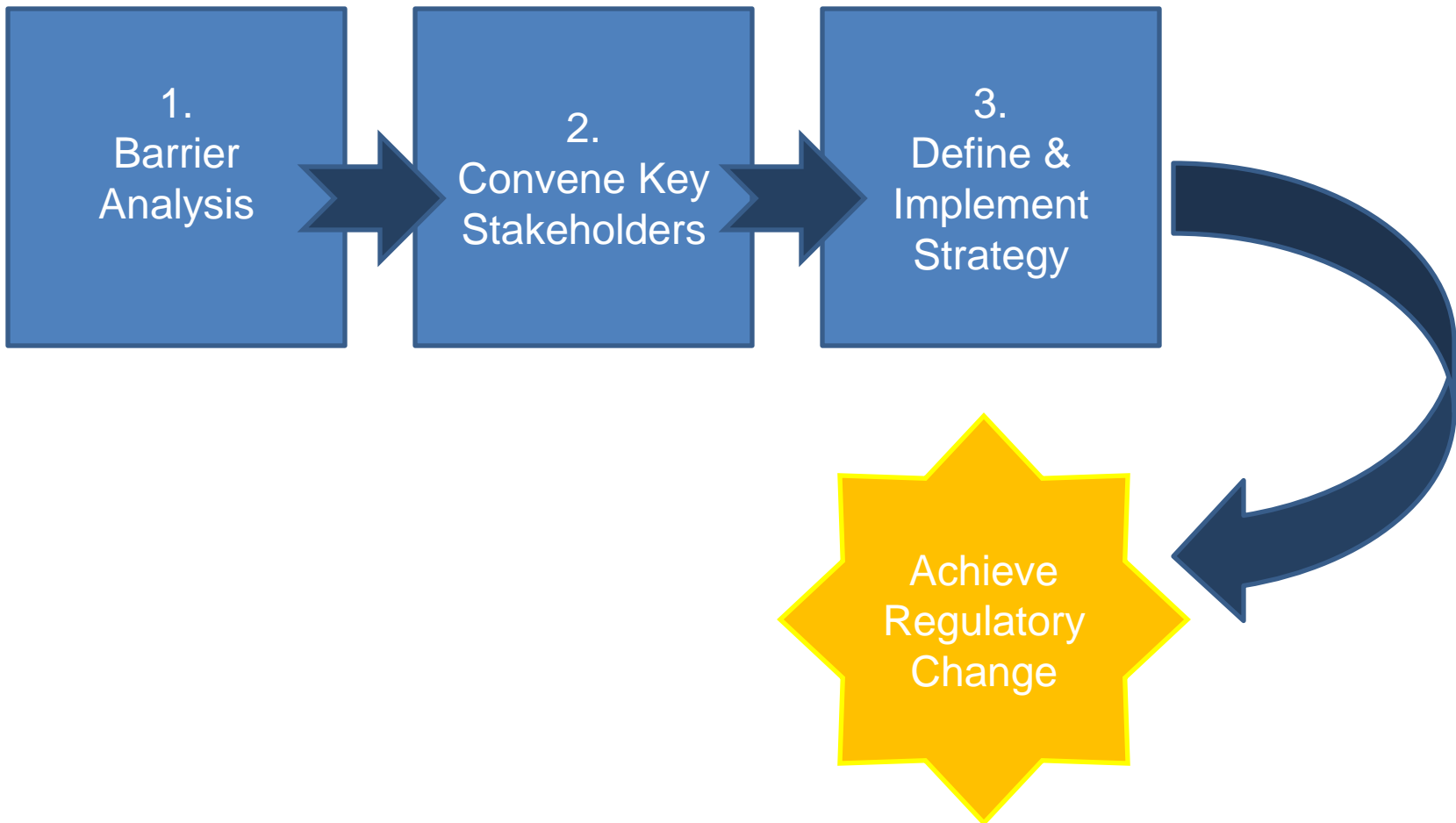
- Identify policies and procedures that pose barriers to a smooth transition into the US health care workforce for internationally trained health professionals
- Provide recommendations to the Advisory Council

Strategy:

- Manage partnerships with Advisory Council members, policy makers and regulatory bodies to achieve recommendations



Achievements: Nurse licensing reform campaign



Timeline of events

- July 2008 RI WBC Director submits letter of intent to become community representative to the RI Board of Nursing
- Nov 2008 Governor appoints Director to Board
- Jan 2009 RI WBC Public Policy & Advocacy subcommittee requests audience with Board
- Mar 2009 RI State Nurses Association presents on behalf of RI WBC: position paper prompts Board to vote in favor of reviewing and updating language of the RI Nursing Regulations re: Internationally-Trained Nurses
- Sep 2009 Nursing regulations opened for revisions/updates
- Sep 2009 – Review period
- Oct 2010



Timeline...cont.

- Oct 2010 Community Review of draft Board of Nursing regulations
- Dec 2010 Public Forum for draft Board regulations
- Nov 2011 Final vote on regulations by RI Board of Nursing
- Feb 2012 New regulations in effect**



Impact

Regulatory changes:

- Impacts the licensing of approximately 25 new internationally trained nurses per year in RI
- Most internationally trained nurses are either unemployed upon enrollment in the RI WBC, or employed as nursing assistants
- Average earnings for a Nurse Assistant: \$14/hr.
- Average earnings for a Registered Nurse: \$34/hr.



Challenges and Lessons Learned

Challenges:

- Engaging the Advisory Council and creating ambassadors
- Educating the community and raising awareness
- Having to educate and engage new members of the Board of Nursing

Lessons Learned:

- The right partners make all the difference
- A carefully planned strategy is worth the investment of time and resources



CONTACT US



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