

PA WDB Quarterly Board Meeting

Wednesday, February 10, 2021

10:00AM to 12:30PM

Skype

Meeting Minutes

Attendance

Members:

- Chair Jeff Brown
- Idayat Adewunmi
- Denise Andahazy
- Shannon Austin
- Senator Camera Bartolotta
- Tim Bean
- Acting Secretary Jennifer Berrier
- Richard Bloomingdale
- Julene Campion
- Representative Morgan Cephas
- Wendie DiMatteo-Holsinger
- Patrick Eiding
- Chekemma Fulmore-Townsend
- Brian Funkhouser
- Nick Gilson
- James Harper, Jr.
- Commissioner Robert J. Harvie, Jr.
- Brad Hollabaugh
- Sarah Hollister
- Timothy James
- Marguerite Kline
- Carrie Lenze
- Representative Ryan Mackenzie
- Bob McAuliffe
- Secretary Teresa Miller
- Henry Nicholas
- Acting Secretary Noe Ortega
- Jodi Pace
- Tom Redden
- Secretary Russell Redding
- Gregg Riefenstahl
- JoAnne Ryan
- Frank Sirianni
- John "Ski" Sygielski
- Jessica Trybus
- Dionne Wallace-Oakley
- Laura Wand
- Yvette Watts
- Senator Lindsey Williams
- Matt Yarnell
- Deputy Secretary Allison Jones for Governor Tom Wolf
- Deputy Secretary Carol Kilko for Secretary Dennis Davin
- David Miles for Secretary Robert Torres
- Dorenda Hamarlund for Secretary John Wetzel

Presenters:

- Wendie DiMatteo-Holsinger, ASK Foods Inc.
- Senator Lindsey Williams, PA Senate
- Dionne Wallace-Oakley, Erie Insurance
- John "Ski" Sygielski, Industry Partnerships and Employer Engagement Committee and HACC, Central Pennsylvania's Community College
- Deputy Secretary Allison Jones, Governor's Office
- Acting Secretary Berrier, PA Department of Labor and Industry

- Deputy Secretary Shelia Ireland, PA Department of Labor and Industry
- Executive Director Shannon Austin, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation
- Dave Miles, PA Department of Aging
- Secretary Russell Redding, PA Department of Agriculture
- Deputy Secretary Carol Kilko, PA Department of Community and Economic Development
- Acting Secretary Noe Ortega, PA Department of Education
- Julie Kane, PA Department of Education
- Secretary Teresa Miller, PA Department of Human Services
- Dorenda Hamarlund, Department of Corrections
- Sarah Hollister, One-Stop Service Delivery System Committee
- Matt Yarnell, SEIU Healthcare PA and Healthcare Workforce Ad Hoc Committee
- Jeffrey Abramowitz, Reentry Ad Hoc Committee
- Rick Bloomingdale, Career Pathways and Apprenticeship Committee
- Chekemma Fulmore-Townsend, Philadelphia Youth Network, Inc. and Youth Committee
- Brian Funkhouser, Continuous Improvement Committee

Staff: Executive Director James Martini, Deputy Director Tracey Turner, Shuana Davis, Mary Hoskins, Michelle Lengel

Welcome and Introductions

Chair's Updates

Chair Brown welcomed everyone to the meeting and reminded everyone that the meeting was being recorded.

Chair Brown said he was looking for a motion to approve the November 10, 2020 minutes.

MOTION: John "Ski" Sygielski made the motion. James Harper Jr. seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Chair Brown noted that at the last meeting, the PA Rehabilitation Council (PARC), requested that someone from the PA WDB serve on their Board. Chair Brown said that position was still open and asked James Martini to talk about that Board a little. Mr. Martini noted that it was the PA Rehab Council and one of the laws they had to follow was to have a member from the Governor's Workforce Development Board to provide insight on workforce development issues as relates to disability. He said if anyone was interested that they could reach out to him and he could talk to them in more detail about it.

Chair Brown said that if anyone was even a little interested to reach out because they needed the help to comply. Chair Brown said that they would also be getting their financial disclosure forms any day. Chair Brown said to call James or his office if anyone needed any assistance.

Chair Brown then introduced the new Acting Secretary of the Department of Labor and Industry, Jennifer Berrier. Acting Secretary Berrier said that she was pleased to join the Board and that she knows the group does great work so she was happy to be participating.

Chair Brown began with the Board member updates. He said that everyone has been going through a lot so they thought it would be useful to have some Board members talk about what they were going through and how they were pivoting and adapting to adjust to pretty difficult circumstances.

Chair Brown called on Bob McAuliffe but he wasn't logged into the call.

Member Presentation - Wendie DiMatteo-Holsinger

Wendie DiMatteo-Holsinger then gave an overview of what they had been going through. She said she had an interesting vantage point in that she serves on a retirement nursing community board, a bank board, and a college board. She said her main job was running a food processing company so it was interesting to have that backdrop as the banking industry had many concerns as well as the nursing home and retirement home community being hit extremely hard. Then she remarked how the college board had to close classes several times. She thinks going back to March and April, as the state went into a mandate from the Governor about masks, they were having a hard time finding masks and they had employees make masks over the weekend. She said they had a lot to consider with the physical aspects of the plant. She said it was very challenging last year from spring to summer. She said one of the things they had trouble with was making sure they had a supply of hand sanitizer. She said as they got into late spring, early summer, what happened was that their customers who are large retailers in 30 states, suddenly had a ripple effect with shutting down their salad bars, deli cases, etc. ASK Foods, Inc. makes the prepared foods that go into most of those things. She said they also sell to companies that distribute to restaurant chains.

Ms. DiMatteo-Holsinger said that as restaurants were closing, they were finding that some orders were going to almost zero in some instances. It was an adjustment of having inventory in some things and people wanting to discontinue items temporarily but very quickly. She said the fall is typically their biggest time because of holiday items but the food industry was trying to regroup and get some more sales so they were pushing some pretty high numbers and there they fell short on trying to find labor. They then had to restrict some of their holiday items so they lost out on sales. She said they were more hopeful going into 2021 that the labor shortage would change but as of the meeting, that they were not seeing that. She said it may perhaps be indicative of the unemployment being refunded with some of the extra dollars. She said they still had many job openings particularly at the entry level. She said they have staggered lines and staggered shifts so they have some manufacturing efficiency reduced. As they looked towards 2021 they were wondering where retail and vaccinations would be. One of their key concerns was making sure their employee group understood the importance of vaccinations and that they were not mandating them but highly recommending them. She said that when the state eventually gets to 1B that they would be able to organize that at the state level for the food industry. She said they believe there is a high interest in their employee group because they have been working the whole time and they were blessed by good employees. She remarked they do look forward to vaccinations in some organized way to the food industry. Chair Brown then thanked her for her presentation.

Member Presentation - Senator Lindsey Williams

Chair Brown then introduced Senator Lindsey Williams. Senator Williams remarked that she served the 38th senatorial district all within Allegheny county. She said the district offices always serve as a connection to state agencies for constituents but starting in March they became a satellite unemployment office. She remarked that they went from 100 to 200 calls per week to 400 to 500 calls per week and that sustained throughout. She said 75% or more of the call volume per week is unemployment related and they were coming in via phone, email, and social media. She said she knows the state employees that do unemployment compensation have been doing so much work since the beginning. She remarked that something that has gotten forgotten with all of the news of the vaccine is that there is still an unemployment crisis in Pennsylvania. Senator Williams commented that she has four constituent relations officers and an office manager and when her office manager left in December they chose not to refill the position and hired a constituent relations officer instead. She said those five people are still struggling to keep up with case volume. Senator Williams then remarked about the emotional labor for her staff and the unemployment staff as they spent all day every day talking to people that hadn't had a check since March. She then shared a story of the struggle that one of her constituents was going through. She stated the state needed to work so that it would never happen again and to buttress up the unemployment office.

Chair Brown thanked Senator Williams for her update and asked how calls were for computer problems with unemployment. Senator Williams said that it was a mix and that computer problems were more at the beginning of the pandemic. She said it was due to a massive influx of people that had never filed for unemployment before. Wendie DiMatteo-Holsinger commented that she wishes to connect people recently unemployed and people looking for them. She said that they just don't seem to be able to connect the two well at the moment, people to jobs. She asked how they incentivize people to switch from unemployment to a job that has a longer term benefit. Senator Williams said that they learned that there is no way to overcommunicate. Chair Brown said that Wendie's question was good and that he was hearing from a lot of employers that they have open positions.

Member Presentation - Dionne Wallace-Oakley

Dionne Wallace-Oakley, the Executive Vice President of HR and Strategy with Erie Insurance, then presented. She remarked that Erie Insurance has had an interesting run. She said they are a property and casualty insurer and offer life insurance as well. They have over 6,000 employees in 12 states including DC and have over 30 office locations as well as being a regional carrier. She said in 2020, Erie Insurance was slated to celebrate its 95th anniversary being in business. She said they had a lot of activities planned to engage the four constituents they always focus on of employees, customers, agents, and a large focus on their community. They were also slated to open a brand new 346,000 square foot seven story building with employees slated to move in after three years of construction. Needless to say, the pandemic changed all of that. She said that 35% of their workforce was already virtual and they had a another 65% of their workforce that they had to move virtually quickly. However, they still had seven to eight percent of essential employees that were still going into the office. A couple things they did as an employer, insurer, and a community advocate was that they made sure they did provide rate reductions to auto insurers in particular. They also did policy holder dividend payments and between the rate reductions and the dividend payments it was about \$400 million value. They also offered out about \$100,000 to the community foundation in Erie. They also provided about \$2 million to agents in branch locations so that they could identify non-profits of their choice in their communities to also help. She said they pride themselves on the human touch. They typically get about 20,000 to 25,000 resumes for applicants and

that increased significantly during COVID and they continued to hire. They also retained their summer internship program, and while they about 100 initially they retained 80 for the program. The internship was offered virtually. In terms of the racial injustices, they were already a part of the CEO Action for Diversity and Racial Equality that was stood up several years ago. She said they are fortunate that they do have lots of opportunities for hiring. The last thing she shared was workplace reset where they constantly look at policies and procedures internally, particularly for employees, and they had to add, enhance, or change over 70 relative to COVID alone. Chair Brown asked if they were having difficulty filling open spots. Dionne Wallace-Oakley said that they weren't and that they had filled over 700 positions last year. That was a combination of internal and external. Over 10% were new jobs.

Member Presentation - John "Ski" Sygielski

John "Ski" Sygielski then presented. He remarked that following Chair Brown on social media was inspiring and that he truly defined who a servant leader is. Mr. Sygielski then remarked there are now 15 community colleges in Pennsylvania, the largest sector of higher education in educating over a quarter of a million students within PA. Erie County Community College is the newest and they will start offering classes in the fall. He then remarked on reflections of what they learned as a higher education institution over the last 11 months. Dr. Ski shared that academic transition of face-to-face to remote happened very quickly. They are using three forms: synchronous, asynchronous, and HyFlex where a faculty member can be in a classroom and address students virtually but also in the classroom. Tutoring and advising may never go back face-to-face as they had more tutoring and advising experiences because of being online. Their workforce development training, about \$10 million a year, got hit hard but their public safety training was doing okay, like police, fire, and EMS.

In regard to technology, Mr. Sygielski said that everyone needs to learn better technology literacy skills. He remarked that the internet connection is essential and they have many students that are not able to connect as the wireless connection is poor. It also expedited them to become much more of a paperless environment. He then said that they had a lot of employee engagement discussions about the insecurities of their employees, health and wellness, and building relationships. Mr. Sygielski remarked it was hard to engage with new employees as it was difficult to not be face to face. In regard to a student perspective, inequities were found in computer technology and internet. Thanks to the foundation they were able to give out hundreds of laptops and desktops and hotspots that helped out. Thanks to isolation, many students developed an awareness of the need for mental health and HACC outsourced the mental health services for a year or two and they were seeing an increase in the mental health services being offered. They have a center that takes care of students' food and housing insecurities as there has been an increase in those areas. Finally, they were grateful for the funding from the state and the feds as they able to put that in their students for things like scholarships but also into the fabric of institution like investing in technology. Mr. Sygielski gave a shoutout to the mayor of Scranton who brought firefighters to be trained for 13 weeks. Chair Brown thanked him and asked if he had a sense if virtual learning left young people less educated and if there was any evidence or facts of where their educational outcome is vs. previous methods. Mr. Sygielski said that he could only talk about it from his perspective but they saw that remote learning was similar, there might a small decline, but many students in hands-on learning were still going to campus so they had 15,000 out of 17,000 students being on one of five campuses and they were not seeing a change in pass rates.

Chair Brown then moved onto agency updates.

Governor's Office Updates

Deputy Secretary Allison Jones provided the report for the Governor's Office. She remarked that the Governor presented his budget to the General Assembly the prior week so Deputy Secretary Jones was going to provide the Board a few highlights. She said she would be sharing a link to the Governor's budget address. First, the Governor's budget continues to invest in PAsmart. Over the past few years, PAsmart which invests in Registered Apprenticeships, Next Gen Industry Partnerships, and various STEM and computer science education initiatives, has received a lot of bipartisan support in the general assembly so they are hopeful that the initiative will continue to move forward in the next budget cycle. Secondly, the Governor renewed his push for the Nellie Bly Scholarship program which was something he proposed for the first time last year. It will help address Pennsylvania's public higher education affordability challenges. Deputy Secretary Jones said that public higher education in Pennsylvania is growing more and more unaffordable for Pennsylvania students and families and so the Governor has proposed a scholarship program to provide assistance to full time undergraduate students at the state system of higher education (PASSHE) and they believe with the revised program this year they would be able to serve all students with a household family income of \$104,800 and the impact of that will be providing additional support to nearly 44,000 students and reducing their incidence of student loan debt burden after they graduate. The goal is to for the most economically disadvantage students, cover the tuition and fee gap that is not covered by Pell and PA state grants. She commented that the Governor has had a long-standing interest in making higher education more affordable but also reducing student loan debt burden so that when students graduate they can invest in their futures and in their communities.

Deputy Secretary Jones highlighted Back to Work PA. Many years ago, the Governor proposed Restore PA which would have invested some badly needed resources across the commonwealth in infrastructure like broadband expansion, blight remediation, etc. They were resources focused on community and economic development as well as more indirectly to the workforce. While the investments are still needed, the Governor proposed repurposing the resources into an initiative they are calling Back to Work PA which strategically invests in the commonwealth's workforce and economic development recovery so they have ongoing resources beyond the federal stimulus. She said they are grateful for it to support the workers and business most significantly impacted by the pandemic as everyone shifts to the reality of the new economy that they are still trying to understand. Back to Work PA builds on the recommendations of the Keystone Command Center which focused a lot on barriers to employment. She said she knows that is a continued focus of the PA Workforce Development Board. They are also trying to address the very specific workforce and business challenges that have emerged during the pandemic. Back to Work PA is intending to lift up and build on initiatives that already exist and work well while also targeting additional investments to fill the gap on where they could use additional support. Some things included in Back to Work PA are an emphasis on digital literacy and broadband access. They know that students, workers, and businesses have really had to quickly pivot to online resources so they wanted to make sure that people in PA have the skills they need to succeed in the workplace and adjust to the online environment. There is an emphasis on middle skills, skilled trades, and non-degree credentials as they know it is a growing demand within the workforce so they want to be prepared. A lot of people who are laid off have an opportunity to reskill/upskill and transfer their skills to new opportunities as they have a lot of valuable experience that transfer well to other environments. From that, the state wants to provide additional support to that kind of skill development. They want there to also be a greater emphasis on the workforce of the future as they know the workforce development system has been investing in high priority and high

demand occupations so they want to continue that and make sure that there are effective training and employment opportunities in those spaces. However, they know that some jobs might not come back so they want to focus on jobs that are automation resilient but also pandemic resilient. There is also emphasis on reshoring and investing in manufacturing and providing resources to local communities so that they can also adjust within their communities and address community needs. Jodi Pace asked if the Governor thought about using the Nellie Bly scholarship for tech schools or community colleges. Deputy Secretary Jones said the scholarship is intended for four year degrees, those students at PASSHE. That is because the four year degree investment over time is larger and those people are typically graduating with more debt but she said that Ms. Pace raised a good point and that in the past the Governor had proposed a program to focus on community college students specifically but it didn't gain as much support as they had hoped so they switched gears. She said that Back to Source PA would include resources for non-four year degrees. There were no other questions.

Agency Report- Department of Labor and Industry

Acting Secretary Jennifer Berrier then provided the update for the Department of Labor and Industry. Acting Secretary Berrier thanked Senator William's for hers and her staffs service in handling the overflow of calls and emails that the Department was not able to handle. In regard to the unemployment compensation area, to date since March 15th the Department processed 5.7 million unemployment compensation claims across 6 programs that includes the regular UC program and the PUA program. She said 5.7 million applications was a humongous task and that in comparison to 2009 during the Great Recession, the Department accepted slightly over 2 million applications. She said they were looking at more than a 150% increase of work that was addressed during the pandemic. They also paid out over \$35 billion in benefits across the six programs. They were averaging for regular UC from 500,000 to 600,000 recurring claims a week. For the PUA program they were averaging about 550,000 claims per week. Acting Secretary Berrier remarked that customer service was one of their pain points. When the federal CARES act expired on December 26th it left them in a lurch because the extension was not signed by the former president until the day after the former act expired. The agency was put in a position where it had to wait for guidance from the federal Department of Labor because there were new requirements and new initiatives that were put into that bill to prevent fraud and to spell out the terms of the extension. The Department of Labor and Industry then worked fastidiously to update the systems to adapt to the requirements that the feds mandated. Unfortunately, that resulted in a month lag in benefits and hurt the Department in customer service. She was happy to report that they were able to roll out the extension of the PUA program and the Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Program. She said they were still facing overwhelming amounts of calls, emails, and chats. They were averaging about 6,000 calls a day that they were answering and they were responding to about 10,000 emails per day. At the beginning of the pandemic they were staffed for a low unemployment rate and had about 770 unemployment compensation employees. As the of the meeting, they had 1,600 staff helping out with the UC program. That includes full time employees, staff they have borrowed from other agencies, and contract staff that they brought onboard. They have been trying to hire as quickly as possible but the tough reality is that the jobs are very tough. Their retention rate is between 50% and 55% for bringing on new staff so that presented challenges. In February they planned on bringing in 120 additional staff as they are being borrowed from PHEEA. She said they began the training program. Next month they would be bringing in additional contracts. Acting Secretary Berrier said that the future of unemployment compensation was uncertain and that there was bound to be more changes for UC.

Deputy Secretary Shelia Ireland then provided the report from the Workforce Development deputate. She said that the meeting was impactful and they heard the board members' viewpoints. Deputy Secretary Ireland then remarked that she wanted to present a strategic overview of the purpose and direction of the work that the deputate had been engaged in for the last quarter. Thanks to the action of Congress, they had the temporary support of the CARES Act one and two as well as the promise of the Biden stimulus package to tide them over for a short time. She said they weren't making the mistake of thinking that the supports weren't temporary. In workforce they were using the breathing room as an opportunity to provide service to the 420,000 unemployed people seeking work in Pennsylvania. In order to do so in the first quarter, they were focusing on three areas. The first was defining the infrastructure needs that they have in order to respond to a world in which service must be delivered virtually. The second was moving from reactive to proactive service delivery and the final being finding programs that engage employers and create career pathways to jobs that pay family sustaining wages. So first, in regard to developing infrastructure and for the deputate to successfully respond to the challenges of the fourth industrial revolution, they must first have the basic systems and infrastructure in place to both leverage opportunities and respond to the challenges. That means moving into service delivery through virtual platforms and part of that is their Wi-Fi expansion project seeks to expand the capacity of the PA CareerLink® to have quality Wi-Fi and broadband capabilities. That is so they can expand both opportunities for service to their customers and leverage the digital platforms and systems that they will be bringing online to increase their ability to serve. Of the 62 PA CareerLink®, they have begun the upgrade of all of them effective the end of last year. Bringing those 62 PA CareerLink®'s digital capacity up is not enough so in mid-January they announced a \$4.5 million grant opportunity that will establish 100 new public computing centers across the state. They will be focused on digital literacy and workforce development programming focused on their digital deserts. The harsh reality of today is that if you are not digitally literate or have limited access to the internet, it is nearly impossible to access a family sustaining wage job. This effort will begin to change conditions across Pennsylvania especially for rural Pennsylvanians. They have partnered with Penn State, the PUC, and the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia to build solutions that further address the digital divide. The work is led by Alvaro Sánchez, the lead researcher at the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia. The next cog in the workforce engine that they are developing is moving service delivery from reactive to proactive. What would happen if they reached out to UC claimants and brought their services to them in a curated and customer focused way as opposed to waiting for people to contact them. The first weeks of the pilot began in October and required course corrections as they did not anticipate UC claimants not believing that their local PA CareerLink® was actually calling them. However, as they got their techniques down, the results improved dramatically and they would be rolling out phase two later in February. In the interim, in the buzz that was generated by those five PA CareerLink® proactive service pilot, all 22 local workforce development boards launched on Jan. 25th a statewide outreach campaign to UC claimant exhausters. Lastly, they put their shoulder to the wheels on funding and launched a series of investments. The Apprenticeship and Training Office (ATO) granted \$6.7 million in apprenticeships contracts and will begin program activities using the Apprenticeship State Expansion funding of \$2.1 million to support the registration of 600 new apprentices. They released \$4.8 million in Direct Care Worker Grants and were awarded to develop and implement systems that focus on delivering effective training programs that will improve the skills of direct care workers and build career pathways to jobs that pay family sustaining wages in this particular field. \$200,000 was awarded for the Veterans' Employment Program to support innovative solutions to address veterans' barriers to employment and \$300,000 was awarded to three workforce boards for the

Business Education Partnerships grants. Those allow school districts to collaborate with local businesses and workforce development boards to educate students and their families about HPO's and their career pathways. This is just some of the work that the deputate performed over the last quarter. Chair Brown asked if there were any questions. Matt Yarnell asked if there was any update on the developing of guidance for Temporary Nurse Aids (TNAs) program that was based on Senate Bill 1268. Deputy Secretary Ireland said that would be under education. There were no other questions.

Agency Report- Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

Executive Director Shannon Austin then provided a report for the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation. She said they have been very vigorous behind the scenes operating their program. She highlighted a handful of things that OVR is working on. She said they were spending a lot of time trying to pivot OVR to be stronger virtually. They do understand the literacy divide especially in individuals with disability where there can be barriers to them having access to technology including where they live. She said they were looking at their current delivery model internally so they can expand what they are doing because even once we get through COVID there is going to be time and space in the virtual space to continue and expand services. Their HGAC in Johnstown continues to work with students even though the rest of OVR is in telework status. The Hiram G. Andrews Center in particular is doing face to face with students and they didn't have any outbreaks. They worked with the Governor's office to develop a sound protocol to get the students there between semesters. Students continue to graduate and go through the programs. They had to cut back in the dorms so they are scaled back internally. They continued to still have a closed order of selection within the agency. They were able to release a little over 3,800 individuals from the closed order of selection at the beginning of December. Their hope over the next few months was to remove individuals from the list monthly starting in March as they were in a better financial place. Referrals were down so with that they had the ability to serve more individuals. Their hope was that as they were more fluid in releasing individuals from the waiting list was that more people would apply and access services.

They also, as of July 1, 2020, put within the state plan their intention to get individuals to apply for OVR services and if they have job issues where they are unable to maintain employment they are able to come off the list in accordance with the state plan so that they can be served. That has been going very well and the people have been captured in the system. They, also as of Jan. 1st, had a program that got emergency funding with the Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services to allow the support service provider program to continue within the state. It was being operated under ODHH in particular and they had two providers that were implementing those services. They were working with two non-profits to implement services to individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing within the Commonwealth to make sure they have some level of independence in the community. OVR was in the process with the program to development an FAQ to explain who was going to be eligible for the program and who can apply, who meets the working definition of being deaf and hard of hearing. They were also going to be doing specialized training with some of the SFP or SSP providers and those that were implementing the program. They recognize that there is 1.2 million individuals in the Commonwealth that potentially do fall in the working definition.

Agency Report- Department of Aging

Dave Miles said the Department of Aging didn't have anything to add to what was already in the briefing book.

Agency Report- Department of Agriculture

Secretary Russell Redding then provided the report for the Department of Agriculture. He mentioned about the work that Chair Brown and Wendie DiMatteo-Holsinger face. He said thanks to the whole food industry as everyone watches its innovation, creativity, and its ability to shift. He noted that they didn't have the opportunity to work from home. He said a piece of what he looks at everyday is the number of individuals who are still food insecure. They were running 525,000 people every week. Since last March that is 25 million people who have been served by food banks in a state of 13 million people roughly. That is a duplicated number but just to keep it in mind. They have continued to work with the industry as noted by Wendie DiMatteo-Holsinger and they were identified in the 1B category. There was a lot of federal activity including the federal H2A program which is the temporary agricultural worker program which is critical to the food system. He said it was a moving target but a couple of things had evolved. They had previously talked about the extension of the USDA labor survey that was being done and the methodology changes for the adverse effect wage rates. He was pleased to say that there were changes in the survey which began in December when the decision was made to change course. They would have an update at a later date. There were some proposed changes on the simplification of that process and they were withdrawn. The Farm Show went virtual for the first time in 105 years and they had 800,000 Facebook followers and 300,000 Farm Show website followers. It took the Farm Show to every county in PA, and every state in the nation as well as internationally. They did have a couple of career panels to focus on ag education as well as the jobs and career opportunities. They continue to work on apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship models. They have a fifth ag specific apprenticeship under development with Penn State looking at meat processing. One of the revelations in the pandemic is the need for that position. Secretary Redding then stated that they were continuing to work with the Department of Education on the standards for ag, food, and natural resources. Wendie DiMatteo-Holsinger then asked if the Secretary saw PA following the models of other states where they were having a lead plant for vaccinations. Secretary Redding said they had been contacted by other states asking that question and they had raised the question with the Department of Health and the Governor's Office and that they would keep working on it.

Agency Report- Department of Community and Economic Development

Deputy Secretary Carol Kilko reported that they have their flagship program, WEDnet, which provides training dollars for incumbent worker training and it was going very strong. One other thing that DCED was working on was the Manufacturing Advisory Council as PA had been selected for a policy academy with nine other states in late 2019. It was delayed somewhat because of the pandemic and one of the items that came out of the goal for PA was that they needed a central guiding council of some sort for the manufacturing industry. She said they don't have workforce specifically noted in the goals but Deputy Secretary Ireland was participating on the council and workforce is interwoven into all of their discussions. Chair Brown asked if there were any questions and there were none.

Agency Report- Department of Education

Acting Secretary Noe Ortega then presented for the PA Department of Education. He said that the US Office of Career and Technical Adult Education recently announced the 95 finalists for the Rethink Adult Education Challenge and recognized programs making advances with pre-apprenticeships. Acting Secretary Ortega said that 7 out of the 95 finalists are from the Commonwealth and only one state yielded more finalists than PA. For the Perkins V state plan, some disruptions of the pandemic effected some of the work around the plan. The Department was going to start work to update the performance metrics

for the Perkins V. Similar to previous processes, there would be comment period in the Spring of 2021. Additionally, there would be several virtual meetings to explain the changes and the circumstances that led to them. For the Career Ready PA Coalition, the Department was able to convene and hold five stakeholder meetings on behalf of the Career Ready PA Coalition. The convenings focused on strategies and best practices to increase awareness for career and workforce readiness. The information on who was there is in the Board meeting packet. They were working through the information that they received to work on next steps of the work. Finally, he mentioned that their LEA's continued to implement Teacher in the Workplace grants and 92 grants were made available at \$25,000 each and the grants connect the classroom to the workplace. The grants are coming to an end in the fall and it is another effort to equip teachers with the knowledge and resources to promote college and career readiness for all students in the Commonwealth.

Chair Brown asked if there was an initiative to better understand the learning gap from the pandemic and if there was any thoughts on how to get young people back up to speed. Acting Secretary Ortega said that they don't have an initiative per say in place. They did however convene a number of groups to talk about the steps needed to assess and measure the learning gaps and then to figure out how they are going to be able to put in place both resources and professional development plans to help people help students catch up. They have been using the term accelerated learning because that is essentially going to be what is needed to bring people up to speed. He said it was likely going to be a multi-year effort and is going to have to span across a number of other stakeholders. He said that post-secondary partners were probably going to have to help uplift those who maybe did not receive adequate time in their secondary school education. They were also going to be thinking about what it means in the career tech space. The basic education programs were going to be key as well.

Julie Kane gave an update on their work with the nurse aid program. She said that a few meetings ago, the PA Workforce Development Board had recommended that PDE and the state consider alternative pathways for the nurse aids that stepped up during the pandemic but that might not have been able to complete the training program to be a certified nurse aid. The Governor did sign the bill that provided that pathway to temporary nurse aids. There had been a push because the federal declaration was set to expire at the end of December but has been extended now. They expect it to go through the end of December but they wanted to let everyone know that PDE was working with the Department of Health and the Department of Human Services on a process by which temporary nurse aids can seek certification and to be placed on the nurse aid registry list that is overseen by the Department of Health. She said they know people are eager to get started and that there are three pathways that individuals can follow. One is to have 80 hours of practical training. There are then three other ways for them to prove that they have the demonstrated competencies for certification. One of them is that they can sit for the CNA exam and Ms. Kane said that would be the preferred way of going. Another way is a process that would allow them to demonstrate competency through an apprenticeship program and through an assessment that would be provided by their employer. They are at the point where they have it written down and would be asking some stakeholders to review it. She said they were figuring out how to get names on a list. She reiterated that because the federal declaration had been extended, Temporary Nurse Aids could continue to work. Ms. Kane said they would keep everyone posted. Chair Brown thanked her for the update.

Agency Report- Department of Human Services

Secretary Teresa Miller then provided the report for the Department of Human Services. She said a lot of their focus over the past year has been on addressing peoples' basic needs. They have a lot of people in congregate care so they were also conscious of how they protect them. She said they were excited about some of the efforts they were taking around workforce development. Secretary Miller remarked that she wanted to highlight the first three items in the report in the Briefing Book. She said that DHS had selected a vendor to implement their statewide resource and referral tool that they have named the Resource Information and Services Enterprise (RISE PA). She said the goal of the project is to better and timelier connect people to resources that can address their social determinant and health needs. It includes healthcare, food, housing, transportation, etc. Their new vendor is Aunt Bertha and they are going to develop an interactive platform that will allow for a closed loop referral system so that they can track referrals and follow-up. Organizations from healthcare providers to faith based organizations to counties, managed care providers, community based entities, schools, other agencies, will be able to better coordinate services and facilitate access to services and supports and track outcomes. Once the tool is in place, workforce providers can use it to help address barriers to employment and other providers can connect people to workforce services. DHS is in the process of hosting webinars and meeting with local entities to prepare them for the rollout of the tool. It will take time to do it. It will be phased out in terms of geography. Secretary Miller said that she believes they are starting with nine counties in Central PA. She commented that it would likely take several years to roll it out completely across the state but that it is an exciting development. The second item is their racial equity report that they released in January. She said it reinforces their commitment to including diversity, equity, and inclusion in all of their work so that they are a good partner in correcting systemic racism and inequities. The report covers health equity, economic justice, early childhood education, child welfare, and juvenile justice. She said that statistics show that black individuals and families are disproportionately impacted by poverty and the impacts of systemic racism are also reflected in the demographics of public assistance program enrollment. They serve a disproportionate number of people of color for the reasons that have everything to do with the impact of systemic racism in our country. She believes the first step to address the inequities in both the agency and the system is to analyze data. That is what the report does. It highlights disparities throughout their programs so they can figure out how they address those. It is meant to be a baseline report which she thinks will hold them accountable as they address those disparities. Finally, she pointed out that they implemented their redesign for their employment and training programs that serve primarily their TANF clients. They don't have a lot great data at this point but she said they do have indications that show improvement in key areas. She said they were seeing better rates of enrollment following referrals to programs, their rates of assessments that were connected to new participants looked good and they were seeing a notable use of new counseling services. It is hard to know the impact of the changes because of rolling it out in the middle of a pandemic but they are hoping to see more enrollment in training and education programs going forward because they know it can lead to economic mobility.

One of the things they did during the pandemic to help those that might be struggling to keep up with services being provided remotely. She said they knew technology barriers were creating a lot of issues for the people they serve so they have been able to add to their special allowances to allow people to be able to get allowances for devices. If they are engaged in an employment and training program they can have access to a device to continue that program. They are pleased with what they have seen so far especially given that we are in a pandemic. Chair Brown said that last time she presented there had been issues with SNAP as related to the Trump administration and he was wondering with the Biden administration it cleared up. Secretary Miller said that she had talked about the emergency allotments they had gotten out

to families and how CLS was going through the legal battle to try to get all families additional assistance. The Biden administration a couple of days into the administration issued an executive order that Secretary Miller believes will be very helpful. She said they had struggled the last four years with the Trump Administration trying to cut benefits. She said the Biden administration coming in sent a strong message that they want to increase SNAP benefits and one of the things that he asked USDA to look at was the issue of emergency allotments. They haven't been able to get them out yet but they think that relief is coming. Secretary Miller then commented on a couple of other things notable with SNAP benefits. A program they were able to implement with the Department of Education was the Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (Pandemic EBT). It essentially was providing to families, that rely on the national school lunch program, meals for kids to account for the fact that that are not in school. Secretary Miller said that it was a significant benefit and a huge lift on the part of school districts, the Department of Education, and the Department of Human Services to get it up and running. The period of time where the schools closed in the spring of last year turned into a \$370 benefit per child. They had a million children that benefited so they had \$370 million through that program alone last spring that they were able to bring into Pennsylvania to help with hunger issues. They now have the opportunity to do the same thing for the entire school year and were working with the Department of Education to make that happen. One of the things that the President did in his executive order was to increase the benefits around PEBT.

The last thing he did that Secretary Miller thought would be incredibly helpful long term in terms of SNAP benefits was asking the USDA to revisit the Thrifty Food Plan which is what SNAP benefits are based on to really see if that is where they need to be or if benefits need to be generally increased. She was encouraged that what they have seen early from the Biden administration is a focus on making sure they are doing everything they can to address hunger through the SNAP program. She said she thinks it can be strengthened. Sarah Hollister asked what the plan was for connecting the Aunt Bertha system to CWDS and data going through already existing infrastructures. She said she was thinking through how that data and information could enhance the staff's ability at PA CareerLink® to serve people. Secretary Miller said she believes that it can be incredibly useful. In some ways, she knows that PA CareerLink® systems have been working to connect people to food banks and other resources over time whether they want to have Aunt Bertha become that system or not, Secretary Miller said it certainly could be that system. In the meantime, the goal is that it would work very well with other systems. She said the goal is to help with duplication and it is only if someone wants their information shared. Chair Brown asked if there were any other questions and there were none.

Agency Report- Department of Corrections

Dorenda Hamarlund then presented for the Department of Corrections. She highlighted that they were continuing to participate in events with chambers, local workforce development boards, and other educational entities to continue educating employers on the benefits of hiring reentrants. They have done a couple roundtables and have a few more set. Ms. Hamarlund said she had been doing it for four years but there are still so many people that are unaware of that untapped population of hiring reentrants. They also in the end of January partnered with OVR and facilitated a reentry employment specialist (RES) training. Due to COVID they provided the training virtually. They do plan on holding others soon. She then highlighted that reentry services parole officers were creating a new workshop for inmates on what to expect when being released during the pandemic. It was going to help with information on how to succeed in a different world prior to when they entered medicine. It is going to talk about telemedicine, virtual learning platforms, getting ready for virtual job interviews. A lot of things they hear from different

committees is technology classes and how to how to teach it. Ms. Hamarlund said they do that inside of the prisons and they were tweaking their classes. Chair Brown asked if there were any questions and there were none.

Committee Update- One-Stop Service Delivery System

Chair Sarah Hollister then presented on One-Stop Service Delivery System committee. She said the One-Stop Committee is new and they were continuing to meet to take stock of the work that is already being done and where they can best provide support and recommendations. She emphasized the themes they see emerging. One is the need for real-time data and how systems interact. She said the one-stop is truly supposed to be a one-stop, so how do they have actionable data available so that staff can appropriately use it to refer people. The second theme is staff training, capacity, and development. They want to make sure that staff are fully supported and have the development opportunities they need in order to help clients as they go in. The third theme is customer service. Their goal is to meet monthly and hopefully have a recommendation in the spring for the Board to consider. Chair Brown asked if there were any questions and there were none.

Member Presentation- Matt Yarnell

Matt Yarnell gave a walkthrough of how their healthcare members are experiencing the crisis of COVID. He focused on nursing homes and remarked that the union brings together over 40,000 healthcare workers. He commented that short staffing in nursing homes was a growing crisis and 11,000 nursing home residents passed since March and they know that Pennsylvania is of the fourth-highest rate of nursing home deaths in the country. Short staffing in nursing home facilities was a longstanding problem with 75% of nursing facilities were below CMS-recommended staffing levels. Advocates and industry experts were pointing to a shortage of trained CNAs as a key challenge to adequate staffing. The pandemic drove the problem to crisis levels with 23 % of all nursing homes reporting critical shortages of CNAs according to the January 2020 study by the US Public Interest Research Group. Mr. Yarnell said that they know that CNAs at nursing homes do vitally important work caring for residents. The work is emotionally demanding and physically dangerous. CNAs are among the highest injury rates of any occupation according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. He said they lost over 11,000 nursing home residents at the same time as there were 63,000 caregivers sickened according to McKnight News. He said that they were among some of the most dangerous jobs in the country prior to the pandemic. CNAs are the lowest paid healthcare professional and have few avenues for career advancement. Many make under \$12 an hour and don't receive regular raises for increased experience or advanced training. Some of the challenges for staffing was that there were low starting wages for hard work which makes it difficult to recruit. He said that they also know that no career ladder and little training or support CNAs frequently quit leading to sky-high turnover. There is a vicious cycle of low staffing because inadequate staffing makes CNAs' jobs even harder. Some long-term solutions are figuring out how to invest in the workforce, enacting strong staffing regulations. He said that staffing regulations hadn't been updated since the 90's and right now the minimum for staffing is 2.7 hours of care a day. Mr. Yarnell said they were advocated to make it 4.1 hours a day. Also, creating a career ladder and improving quality through certifications in key emerging fields like infection control. Another solution would be supporting new CNAs with training and mentorship to improve retention. Mr. Yarnell then showed a map of where approved CNA training was across the Commonwealth as well as the deserts where it would be hard for someone to get to in person learning.

He also supplied a map of all of the programs reporting active during COVID. Chair Brown asked if there was any questions and there were none.

Committee Update- Healthcare Workforce Ad Hoc

Chair Matt Yarnell remarked that they approved recommendations back in August 2020. He then ran through the four recommendations that the Healthcare Workforce Ad Hoc committee was proposing. He said that recommendation 1 was about creating more opportunity for blended learning to be able to meet the need and train certified nursing assistants. The recommendation is specifically asking that they be more flexible with registered nurse educators and was asking PDE to allow for blended education for online classroom education for the standard program for CNA training but there would be in-person clinicals, with final skill demonstrations conducted in person. He said it would allow for new innovative programs. Recommendation 2 asks that DOH, PDE, and DHS review the requirements for nurse educators that provide CNA instruction to identify ways to improve recruitment of educators and to expand the pool of educators, specially allowing Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs) to be educators to increase the capacity and availability of train the trainer programs, including virtual programs across the commonwealth. He remarked that often instructors are part time. He said that that the importance of passing the recommendations from a stakeholder committee helps frame where they think the government ought to go. Recommendation 3 is about asking DOH and DHS to examine the role of med techs. He said that med techs currently don't play a role in skilled nursing facilities and there has been a question raised to look at using med techs in nursing facilities if it would allow for career advancement. It is not to eliminate or erode the need for existing RN and LPN roles but another way in which they can build the career ladder and meet the need of residents. Recommendation 4 is about lifting up the need for competency-based Alzheimer's and dementia training and cultural competencies training (including those applicable to the LGBTQIA population). All of it being focused on person-centered care, should be an industry standard for all direct care professionals across all long-term service and support settings and home and community based service providers. This kind of work need to be culturally competent. Chair Yarnell then remarked that those were the four recommendations coming from the ad hoc committee pending approval from the Board. Chair Brown asked if there were questions or concerns. John "Ski" Sygielski said Chair Yarnell made twenty people at HACC very happy as well as 100 CNA students that were waiting to get in because HACC couldn't get the right training people in. Chair Brown commented that he thought the recommendations were awesome and that the committee was making recommendations on how to improve healthcare and Chair Brown appreciated that broader view.

MOTION: John "Ski" Sygielski made a motion to approve all of the recommendations. Pat Eiding seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Senator Camera Bartolotta said that she loved all of the recommendations and that she and her staff were working hard to facilitate growth for their nurse practitioners. She said she had a bill that they were trying to put forward for some time about full practice authority for nurse practitioners. She said more than ever they should be able to release the army of very educated, highly skilled, competent nurse practitioners to practice in their field with full autonomy. Chair Brown thanked her and said that he had first hand experience working with nurse practitioners and that they were a good way to address routine healthcare needs. Idayat Adewunmi commented that she was a pharmacist by trade and was wondering if she had heard of another state giving pharmacists the authority to be a prescriber. Senator Bartolotta said she had

not heard of it but that she would look into it. Chair Brown said a lot of pharmaceutical medicines were not over the counter but they should be as they are routine.

Committee Update- Industry Partnerships and Employer Engagement

Chair John “Ski” Sygielski then provided an update. He said that there were three things from their report in the briefing book that he wanted to summarize. The first was that the committee put together a purpose statement that was giving them direction and helping evaluate their work. The second was that they still believe that the PA CareerLink® was under marketed and underutilized and they have engaged with employers to figure out a way to enhance employer knowledge. From that they created a marketing tool. Finally, they continue to listen to the strengths and weakness or employer engagement in the systems and figure out how to enhance the systems that the state offers to employers.

Committee Update- Reentry Ad Hoc

Co-chair Jeffrey Abramowitz remarked that the Reentry Ad Hoc committee was meeting on a regular basis and their employer one-pager would be going out soon. They were also continuing their virtual roundtable discussions with the next one being in Allegheny County. They met recently to align their priorities for 2021 and look at targets for what they could be doing. He said they were engaged with SHRM on a tool called Getting Talent Back to Work and they recently launched a toolkit and training module for HR professionals and employers on what it takes to get people back to work. He said it was completely free and you can learn about challenges that men and women in the criminal justice system face as they try to get back into employment. He then remarked that himself and Chrissie Klinger were assigned as moderators for the LINCS at the US Department of Education in their communities of practice. He said that he would be overseeing the correctional and reentry education space and Chrissie Klinger would be overseeing Career Pathways. Chair Brown asked if there would be any recommendations at the next meeting. Co-chair Abramowitz said there would.

Committee Update- Career Pathways and Apprenticeship

Chair Rick Bloomingdale said that the committee was working on recommendations with the help of Shuana Davis and James Martini. He said they were continuing to struggle with making sure that people who are underemployed or coming out of high school knows what career opportunities were available to them. He said that there are so many skills were you can start with a high school diploma but then get additional training and build on the career ladder. He said they were focused on making sure that everyone in Pennsylvania knows about the career opportunities.

Member Presentation - Chekemma Fulmore-Townsend

Chekemma Fulmore-Townsend noted that non-profits were continuing to struggle with many resources going towards basic needs as budgets were insecure. Transitioning to virtual service delivery presented challenges for non-profits and the participants in the program especially as related to lack of technology and access to devices as well as some of the services not being easily transitioned to virtual. She said that the Philadelphia Youth Network works with over 140 non-profits in Philadelphia and they were able to identify quickly where they could change in order to meet the demands during the pandemic. They had to identify what safe operations consisted of and what the boundaries were like having access to PPE and ensuring their safety at locations. About 85 percent of services were delivered virtually and 15 percent were in person in terms of work experience over the summer. A significant amount of effort went into

training and research as they understood better what it meant to in the same physical space, how to employ strategies for social distancing, and how to address those emergent needs that came with new use of technology. One of the challenges of the non-profit sector is the lack of amount of money being invested in continuous improvement. She said despite the challenges, when they think of providing young people with employment opportunities, they face two major constraints. One is that businesses were being shut down or not returning so there was less physical space for young people to work. The second was young people competing for positions that adults were then willing to take because they were out of work. They were able to transition their summer employment program to virtual options and were able to employ 6,100 young people, they earned about \$4.6 million over the course of the summer. The earnings were being used to directly support families and meet the needs of young people so it was very critical that they were able to keep those services going. She remarked that everyone thought that COVID life would be shorter and they were looking at what it means to redefine workforce preparation for young people and what it means for them to acquire skills and to understand the behaviors that can be applied on worksites and work independently in a virtual context. She remarked quite frankly that it means reexamining the regulations around youth employment so that it can be done in a way that is seamless and efficient. She said fundamentally how they work has changed forever. She added that several studies were done over the summer that indicate the economic devastation will undo about a decade of progress with opportunity youth. She said it would a multi-year effort to recapture the time and experiences that they lost. She wanted to highlight that the workforce system for young people was not immune to that.

Committee Update- Youth

Chair Chekemma Fulmore-Townsend then presented for the Youth Committee. She said they were exploring what has happened during the pandemic to young people and services as well as looking at data and information and how they could use that to improve programming. She said at a recent meeting they had made a recommendation on categorizing evidence towards evaluation and they were taking that work a step further. She then said they got over 100 responses to a survey they had released which gave them a better sense of how programs across the commonwealth were viewing evaluation. It also gave them a better understanding of what their needs may be as it relates to training. She said there were a variety of responses but a certainty is that it is an important lever in which they can improve programs so they have to be intentional about the ways in which they make resources available for evaluation and taking a leadership role in terms of coordination and access to strong evaluation systems. She then talked about a recommendation on officially documenting the TANF Youth Development Program data in the CWDS system. She said the data is currently kept separately and the change would allow for integrating youth related data plans, assessing, and understanding how investments are working towards the effectiveness for the youth population.

MOTION: Chekemma Fulmore-Townsend made the motion to approve. Matt Yarnell seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Committee Update- Continuous Improvement

Chair Brian Funkhouser said the Continuous Improvement Committee was also looking at the data from the evidence and evaluation capacity survey. He said they had 250 respondents but about 100 of them were detailed responses. That information is provided in the briefing book. As a result, they have a recommendation as well. The recommendation is regarding a pilot grant program that would select one program to look at as a pilot for increased focus on evidence collection and increased rigor on evaluation.

MOTION: Brian Funkhouser made the motion and Wendie DiMatteo-Holsinger seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Chair Funkhouser said they would be holding a presentation on March 15th from the team working on the common intake process for the users of the PA CareerLink®.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Chair Brown sought a motion to adjourn.

MOTION: Dr. Ski made the motion to adjourn. Wendie DiMatteo-Holsinger seconded. The motion passed unanimously.