

UMass Memorial turns to apprenticeships in effort to boost workforce

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WORCESTER, Mass. - This week is Massachusetts Apprenticeship Week, and UMass Memorial announced plans to launch its first registered apprenticeship program.

What You Need To Know

This week is Massachusetts Apprenticeship Week, which highlights the benefits of "earn to learn" models of job training

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Quinsigamond Community College hosted an apprenticeship Conference on Wednesday

Speakers included Massachusetts Secretary of Labor and Workforce Development Lauren Jones

Workforce shortages have made it difficult for many industries to find the right candidates to train and hire, but "earn and learn" apprenticeship programs could give employees who have been wanting to advance their careers the boost they need to finally go for it.

Kelly Aiken, director of workforce development and planning for UMass Memorial, said this new tool will help the hospital find untapped talent.

"Many, many people really need support, they can't just drop their jobs," Aiken said. "The registered apprenticeship model and those affiliated with it really are a new tool for us to be able to tap into untapped talent and create new ways to fill those critical jobs."

Apprenticeships are typically associated with the trades, but when it comes to workforce development, many believe the model could also be beneficial for industries like health care, information technology and manufacturing.

Kathleen Manning, dean of the Center for Workforce Development at Quinsigamond Community College, said its important to take prospective employees' financial strain into consideration.

"There's a whole group of hidden workers out there that have sort of given up on trying to enter the workforce for a variety of reasons," Manning said. "What we're trying to do is pull those people in and give them that nontraditional entry into a career pathway, and not get them into a dead end job."

Quinsigamond Community College hosted an apprenticeship conference Wednesday in Worcester, where participants learned about apprenticeships in health care, biotech and advanced manufacturing.

Massachusetts Secretary of Labor and Workforce Development Lauren Jones was in attendance, and signaled the Healey administration's support for expanding apprenticeship programs across the state. She said with the support of the Massachusetts Legislature, more money will be in the fiscal year 2024 budget for new apprenticeship programs.

"We're making sure that we are intentional in supporting opportunities for expanded registered apprenticeship and partnering with organizations to make sure they have the tools they need to build programs and to support that registered apprenticeship training model we know is so effective," Jones said.

For more information on Massachusetts Apprenticeship Week or to learn more about some of the initiatives being highlighted during it, visit the state's official [website](#).