

## Centralized Clinical Placement System

### **I. Purpose of This Memorandum**

This Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) outlines the agreement between the partners listed below to implement the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education’s Centralized Clinical Placement System (CCP) in Western Massachusetts. As outlined in the Western Massachusetts Nursing Workforce Strategic Plan, the CCP system is a critical strategy in the region’s efforts to ensure our community has an adequate supply of diverse, qualified nurses needed now and in the future to deliver quality care to all.

The CCP system was developed by the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education (DHE) as a stand-alone web-based software tool designed to facilitate the display, scheduling, and management of clinical nursing education placements between healthcare organizations and nursing education programs. The overall purpose of the CCP is to use information technology to streamline the clinical placement process for nurse educators in academic and clinical settings. The partners’ goals for the CCP include reducing the amount of time spent scheduling clinical placements, improving utilization of existing clinical sites and expanding the variety of clinical sites used by nursing education programs. The partners listed below maintain responsibility for system implementation in accordance with the CCP’s Operating Framework and specific policies and procedures agreed to by all partners.

### **II. Term**

This MOA shall be in effect from July 1, 2024 until June 30, 2026 and is considered as an attachment to the Healthcare Workforce Partnership of Western Massachusetts memorandum of understanding. Termination of this MOA prior to the effective end date requires written approval of all partners.

### **III. Partners**

The partners commit to collaboratively working together to implement the CCP in Western Massachusetts. The partners include:

#### **Schools of Nursing**

- i. American International College
- ii. Bay Path University
- iii. College of Our Lady of the Elms
- iv. Greenfield Community College
- v. Holyoke Community College
- vi. Springfield Technical Community College
- vii. University of Massachusetts, Amherst
- viii. Westfield State University

#### **Service Providers**

- i. Baystate Health, Inc.
- ii. Cooley Dickinson Health Care
- iii. Holyoke Medical Center
- iv. Mercy Medical Center and its Affiliates

#### **Workforce Development**

MassHire Hampden County Workforce Board

#### IV. Roles and Expectations of Partners

Partner	Role	Expectations
<b>MA DHE</b>	Facilitate the display, scheduling, and management of clinical nursing education placements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Reduce the amount of time spent scheduling clinical placements</li> <li>ii. Improve the utilization of existing clinical sites</li> <li>iii. Expand the variety of clinical sites used by nursing education programs</li> </ul>
<b>Schools of Nursing</b>	Coordinate with employers to place students into available clinical education opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Designate a primary and secondary points of contact for all CCP communications and systems usage</li> <li>ii. Update contact information on the directory list in the CCP as soon as there's been a change in the organization</li> <li>iii. Provide timely data and responses based on finalization schedule</li> <li>iv. Attend all CCP user meetings</li> <li>v. Work to resolve conflicts in a timely manner</li> <li>vi. Monitor/schedule/incorporate debrief meeting between new managers and clinical faculty to discuss clinical placement experience</li> <li>vii. SON designated leader may conduct unannounced visits to the units to observe clinical groups</li> <li>viii. Communicate issues and concerns with direct contacts listed in the CCP before escalating conversations to involve senior leaders</li> <li>ix. Ensure timely orientation/training of new clinical faculty</li> <li>x. Provide direct and indirect supervision to nursing students by clinical instructor</li> <li>xi. Adhere to hospital and unit guidelines</li> <li>xii. Pay designated rate per undergraduate nursing student as defined by the DHE</li> <li>xiii. Participate in Western MA Nursing Collaborative to advise on CCP policy and clinical education redesign opportunities</li> <li>xiv. Adhere to all policies and procedures outlined in the MOA</li> </ul>
<b>Service Providers</b>	Coordinate with schools of nursing to place students into available clinical education opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Designate a primary and secondary points of contact for all CCP communications and systems usage</li> <li>ii. Update contact information on the directory list in the CCP as soon as there's been a change in the organization</li> <li>iii. Provide timely data and responses based on finalization schedule</li> <li>iv. Attend all CCP user meetings</li> <li>v. Work to resolve conflicts in a timely manner</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>xv. Incorporate student clinical placement expectation into new managers’ orientation.</li> <li>vi. Monitor/schedule/incorporate debrief meeting between new managers and clinical faculty to discuss clinical placement experience.</li> <li>vii. Pay designated rate per bed as defined by the DHE</li> <li>viii. Participate in Western MA Nursing Collaborative to advise on CCP policy and clinical education redesign opportunities</li> <li>ix. Adhere to all policies and procedures outlined in the MOA</li> </ul>
<b>MassHire Hampden County Workforce Board</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Convene &amp; manage the Western Mass Nursing Collaborative</li> <li>• Serve as fiscal agent for partnership</li> <li>• Provide aggregate CCP reporting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Collect funds from schools of nursing and HCOs to support CCP implementation and usage fees</li> <li>ii. Provide payment to the Department of Higher Education based on calculated user fees for schools of nursing and HCOs</li> <li>iii. Assist with conflict resolution process when necessary</li> <li>iv. Conduct a bi-annual review of the contact directory list on the CCP to verify that all contact information is updated.</li> <li>v. Facilitate senior leadership discussions regarding CCP policy development and enforcement of guidelines</li> <li>vi. Produce annual reports and metrics according to partner requirements and available data from the DHE</li> </ul>

**V. General Terms and Conditions**

Each partner agrees to comply with the terms and conditions of this MOA. The following terms and conditions may be revised or modified at any time during the effective period of the MOA, upon written consent of all of the partners. With input from each region, the DHE has established a CCP Operating Framework and a set of defined guidelines based on collaboration, cooperation and teamwork. The partners have provided further detail to the framework and guidelines in order to effectively manage system implementation.

**VI. CCP Operating Framework**

*The Massachusetts Board of Registration (BORN) Guidelines for Clinical Education Experience* serves as a framework for the Massachusetts CCP model. The partners have expanded on the framework developed by the DHE to provide additional guidance and accountability for partners engaged in system implementation. Collaboration and cooperation guide all interactions between partners.

**VII. Clinical Placement Process**

- All clinical placement requests are designed to be user-friendly and efficient. Healthcare organizations and nursing programs enter specific information about clinical education placements using web-based forms. The website’s forms and automated emails allow participants to post, edit and respond to clinical placement requests.
- Nursing programs request a placement; healthcare organizations accept or reject that request.

- All participating nursing programs and healthcare organizations will make the best effort to honor the commitments they make with regards to clinical dates and hours.
- As new schools or academic programs are entered into the system, current placements and/or relationships remain intact, however an organization’s total individual placement allocations may be impacted based on the healthcare organizations available capacity.
- The partners have developed a general timeframe for the clinical placement scheduling process. Specific dates for each year will change but the general timeframe will remain the same:

<b>Action Required</b>	<b>Fall</b>	<b>Winter/Spring</b>	<b>Summer</b>
Schools request placements from HCOs	Second Friday in April	Second Monday in October	First Friday in March
HCOs respond to school requests and either accepts or rejects requests for clinical placements	Second Friday in May	Second Monday in November	First Friday in April
Schools submit finalized clinical placement information to HCOs	Third Monday in August	Second Friday in December	

- Schools of Nursing are required to provide finalized clinical placement information to the healthcare organizations by the specified date. Specific information requested is start/end date of clinical rotation, number of students, and name of faculty if known.
- The healthcare organizations recognize the difficulty in securing clinical faculty but stress the need to know the faculty name prior to the clinical rotation start date so appropriate scheduling arrangements can be made for site-specific orientation activities. Faculty must be oriented at least 24 hours prior to bringing students onsite for clinical instruction. Failure to provide final clinical placement information on the specified dates could result in the cancellation of the clinical rotation at the healthcare organization.
- All clinical placement conversations and requests must be done through the CCP by the clinical placement coordinators. Clinical instructors and nurse managers will be informed during orientation that making direct requests for clinical placements between each other is strictly prohibited. Failure to adhere to this process creates major disruptions in the healthcare facilities and placements students at risk.
- If a school would like to switch a placement with another school, the schools should speak to each other directly. If they agree to switch, then they can make the request to the organization.

**VIII. Contracts between Healthcare Organizations and Schools of Nursing**

- The Massachusetts CCP system does not require a contract between the nursing program and the health care organization until a clinical placement is negotiated and confirmed.
- Once a clinical placement is confirmed, the nursing program and/or the health care organization decide upon the contract form and parameters that they will use for their contract.

**IX. Governance Structure & Decision Making Process**

- The nurse leaders serving on the Western Mass Nursing Collaborative will set strategic direction for the CCP. These decisions are made according to the consensus-based decision making process adopted by the partners.

- The CCP User Group will make decisions regarding the CCP system, content and scheduling process. Decisions are made according to the consensus-based decision making process adopted by the partners.
- Discussions are important to the process. The focus, however, is on making decisions that facilitate the development of the CCP. When the CCP User group deems it necessary, decisions will be made using a majority vote.
- The region may elect to use a regional negotiation meeting to review and finalize its clinical placements.

#### **X. Conflict Resolution Process**

- Conflicts regarding specific placements are resolved on a case-by-case, issue-by-issue basis.
- Issues should be brought to the attention of the DHE and the CCP education or employer liaison.
- All parties work to find an acceptable solution for each other. Resolution will be facilitated by the partners unless the assistance of the DHE or the CCP education and employer liaison is necessary.
- As conflicts arise, the nature and resolution of the conflict will be shared with the CCP user group so that the group may learn from the interaction.
- Upon resolution, all issues should be documented by the CCP users and made available to senior nurse leaders.
- Unresolved conflicts should be brought to the attention of the senior nurse leaders of the impacted organizations to determine the best approach to resolution.

#### **XI. Online Orientation**

- Schools of Nursing agree to require students to complete the standardized online orientation available on the CCP website.
- Healthcare organizations agree to accept the completion of the standardized online orientation available on the CCP website to demonstrate knowledge in agreed upon areas. Each healthcare organization may have site-specific orientation requirements that students will have to complete.

#### **XII. Student and Faculty Passport**

Partners agree to make every attempt to standardize the collection of necessary student and/or faculty health and safety information and to accept documentation developed by the partners. The standardized clinical placement requirements are reviewed, updated, and approved on annual basis by the nursing collaborative CCP users. Ongoing monitoring of the standardized process is conducted in the monthly WMNC meetings.

#### **XIII. CCP Usage Fees and Partner Payment Process**

The DHE determines CCP usage fees for all partners based on number of beds or students. Partners agree to the payment of CCP usage fees on an annual basis. The Western Mass Nursing Collaborative as an initiative of the Healthcare Workforce Partnership of Western Mass is financially supported by the partners. The partners agree that the CCP usage fees will be included in their annual financial support of the partnership.

#### **XIV. Guidelines for the Inclusion of New Users**

The partners seek to bring additional healthcare organizations that currently serve as clinical placement sites or are willing to provide clinical placements to students as a new site. Per DHE policy, new users will be supported by the DHE for twelve months as they learn how to use the system. After twelve months, they will be expected to pay the appropriate usage fee.

**XV. Reporting and Evaluation**

MassHire Hampden County Workforce Board (MHHCWB) will provide regional aggregate reporting based on historical data available from the CCP system and the DHE. The report is intended to provide partners with information about clinical placement availability and usage. Reporting periods will align with academic calendars and the availability of historical data. The partners will conduct an annual evaluation of the CCP to assess effectiveness and the availability of clinical placements for students. The evaluation results shall be distributed to all partners.

**XVI. Accountability for Following Policies and Procedures**

In the event that a Partner identified in Section III does not adhere to the policies, procedures and protocols agreed to in this MOA, the WMNC Co-Chairs, working in consultation with the MHHCWB, will meet with the Partner to resolve the issue. Failure to reach a resolution will result in the Partner being removed as a party to the CCP Memorandum of Agreement with all stated privileges, rights and conditions described in the MOA being rescinded. The WMNC Co-Chairs, working in consultation with the MHHCWB, will notify, in writing, the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education- Centralized Clinical Placement System Department, and the Advisory Board of the Healthcare Workforce Partnership of Western Massachusetts of this action.

**XVII. Inclusion of Allied Health Clinical Placements**

The CCP is currently designed to accommodate nursing student placements only. The partners would also like allied health student placements to be scheduled using the CCP system. The DHE is aware of this desire and will inform the partners of next steps.