

The Honorable Emily DeRocco

Assistant Secretary of Labor
U.S. Department of Labor
Department of Employment & Training

HOSA members were pleased to welcome Secretary DeRocco to HOSA! Secretary DeRocco met with HOSA leaders and members of the healthcare community in Atlanta. She listened to presentations on HOSA's workforce partnerships and the efforts being made in high schools, technical schools and colleges to promote career opportunities in health care.

Secretary DeRocco traveled to Atlanta Technical College where three of HOSA's 14 health career skill events were taking place. She watched as students demonstrated technical skills learned in the classroom and perfected through HOSA, and talked with them about their career plans and learning achievements. HOSA members in Dental Assisting, Medical Laboratory Assisting, and Physical Therapy were able to share the impact that HOSA is having on their future health careers. Highlights of the visit included:

Two competitors demonstrated how to prepare an alginate impression. The competitor from New Jersey missed her Dental Assisting graduation in order to attend the HOSA National Conference. She told the Assistant Secretary that "everybody" got to graduate, and that she was the "only one" who earned the right to participate in

national competition. She does have a dental assisting job waiting when she returns home.

The Dental Assisting competitor from Mississippi is enrolled in a Dental Hygiene program. She told the Assistant Secretary "I didn't know what I wanted to do when I was in high school - then I took Health Occupations. That got me interested in Dental Hygiene, and pretty soon I'm going to graduate with my Associate Degree."

In the Medical Laboratory, two students demonstrated the skills they had performed in competition. They assured the Assistant Secretary and the large group of VIPs who were watching that demonstrating their skills for a crowd was easy – competing for a judge was the difficult part! The competitor from Florida explained that "I have a BS in Biology, but couldn't find a good job. Soon I'll be a Medical Laboratory Technician and have my pick of jobs. I love this program because I get to do the science I love. Eventually, I plan to earn my Bachelor's degree in Medical Technology."

In Physical Therapy, a competitor from Texas demonstrated how to teach a patient to walk using a walker. Secretary DeRocco's assistant was the patient. The student explained to the Assistant Secretary, "I attend the South Texas High School for Health Professions. We





don't have sports at our school. HOSA is our sport. Everybody at our school is involved in HOSA."

The Assistant Secretary talked with a large group of students who had finished competing. When asked about HOSA, the group enthusiastically agreed – "It makes a difference." One student explained, "I was very shy before I got involved in HOSA. Then I learned a skill, and I realized that I could do something difficult and do it well. That gave me confidence in myself that I never had before." Another student shared that, "HOSA makes you work hard, but it's worth it. My school is the only school in our county that has HOSA – but I think everybody should have a chance to do what I've done."

The Assistant Secretary's visit to Atlanta Technical College was a very positive experience. Competitors who had completed their skills were randomly selected to repeat their skill performance for the Assistant Secretary and other VIPs in the group. Secretary DeRocco asked many questions, and learned that:

Not only can HOSA members perform the skills in their competitive event, but they knew why they do the skill, what is normal, and what to be looking for when the skill is performed.

For skilled HOSA members, the job outlook is very bright.

Dental Assisting students take a class on "Dental Psychology" to help them care for anxious patients.

Health professionals who judge HOSA events are thrilled to see what HOSA is doing because the shortage of health care workers directly affects them.

The healthcare community plays an important role in Health Occupations and HOSA. At the local level, they provide a place and the materials for students to learn their skills. At the national level, the healthcare community is vital because they provide the judges, materials, and laboratories that are integral to national competition.

Secretary DeRocco had an opportunity to speak to the voting delegates at the HOSA Business Session. She praised HOSA members who work hard to achieve their goals, and shared the pride she felt in watching HOSA members demonstrate their skills. HOSA President Joel Arvizo presented Secretary DeRocco with a plaque in appreciation for her interest in tomorrow's healthcare professionals.

