

1 TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

2 The Committee on Health Care to which was referred House Bill No. 607  
3 entitled “An act relating to increasing the supply of primary care providers in  
4 Vermont” respectfully reports that it has considered the same and recommends  
5 that the bill be amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and  
6 inserting in lieu thereof the following:

7 Sec. 1. 18 V.S.A. § 9491 is amended to read:

8 § 9491. HEALTH CARE WORKFORCE; STRATEGIC PLAN

9 (a) The Director of Health Care Reform in the Agency of Human Services  
10 shall ~~oversee the development of~~ maintain a current health care workforce  
11 development strategic plan that continues efforts to ensure that Vermont has  
12 the health care workforce necessary to provide care to all Vermont residents.  
13 ~~The Director of Health Care Reform may designate an entity responsible for~~  
14 ~~convening meetings and for preparing the draft strategic plan. The Green~~  
15 ~~Mountain Care Board established in chapter 220 of this title shall review the~~  
16 ~~draft strategic plan and shall approve the final plan and any subsequent~~  
17 ~~modifications.~~

18 (b)(1) ~~The~~ In maintaining the strategic plan, the Director or designee shall  
19 ~~collaborate with the area health education centers, the State Workforce~~  
20 ~~Development Board established in 10 V.S.A. § 541a, the Prekindergarten-16~~  
21 ~~Council established in 16 V.S.A. § 2905, the Department of Labor, the~~

1 ~~Department of Health, the Department of Vermont Health Access, and other~~  
2 ~~interested parties to develop and maintain the plan~~ consult with an advisory  
3 group composed of the following seven members, at least one of whom shall  
4 be a nurse, to develop and maintain the strategic plan:

5 (A) one representative of the Green Mountain Care Board’s primary  
6 care advisory group;

7 (B) one representative of the Vermont State Colleges;

8 (C) one representative of the Area Health Education Centers’  
9 workforce initiative;

10 (D) one representative of federally qualified health centers;

11 (E) one representative of Vermont hospitals;

12 (F) one representative of physicians; and

13 (G) one representative of long-term care facilities.

14 (2) The Director or designee shall serve as the chair of the advisory  
15 group.

16 (c) The Director of Health Care Reform shall ensure that the strategic plan  
17 includes recommendations on how to develop Vermont’s health care  
18 workforce, including:

19 (1) the current capacity and capacity issues of the health care workforce  
20 and delivery system in Vermont, including the shortages of health care  
21 professionals, specialty practice areas that regularly face shortages of qualified

1 health care professionals, issues with geographic access to services, and unmet  
2 health care needs of Vermonters;

3 (2) ~~the resources needed to ensure that:~~

4 ~~(A) the health care workforce and the delivery system are able to~~  
5 ~~provide sufficient access to services given demographic factors in the~~  
6 ~~population and in the workforce, as well as other factors;~~

7 ~~(B) the health care workforce and the delivery system are able to~~  
8 ~~participate fully in health care reform initiatives, including establishing a~~  
9 ~~medical home for all Vermont residents through the Blueprint for Health~~  
10 ~~pursuant to chapter 13 of this title and transitioning to electronic medical~~  
11 ~~records; and~~

12 ~~(C) all Vermont residents have access to appropriate mental health~~  
13 ~~care that meets standards of quality, access, and affordability equivalent to~~  
14 ~~other components of health care as part of an integrated, holistic system of~~  
15 ~~care;~~

16 ~~(3) how State government, universities and colleges, the State's~~  
17 ~~educational system, entities providing education and training programs related~~  
18 ~~to the health care workforce, and others may develop the resources in the~~  
19 ~~health care workforce and delivery system to educate, recruit, and retain health~~  
20 ~~care professionals to achieve Vermont's health care reform principles and~~  
21 ~~purposes; and~~

1           ~~(4) reviewing data on the extent to which individual health care~~  
2           ~~professionals begin and cease to practice in their applicable fields in Vermont;~~

3           ~~(5) identifying factors which either hinder or assist in recruitment or~~  
4           ~~retention of health care professionals, including an examination of the~~  
5           ~~processes for prior authorizations, and making recommendations for further~~  
6           ~~improving recruitment and retention efforts;~~

7           ~~(6)~~(3) assessing the availability of State and federal funds for health care  
8           workforce development.

9           ~~(c) Beginning January 15, 2013, the Director or designee shall provide the~~  
10           ~~strategic plan approved by the Green Mountain Care Board to the General~~  
11           ~~Assembly and shall provide periodic updates on modifications as necessary.~~

12           [Repealed.]

13           Sec. 2. HEALTH CARE WORKFORCE STRATEGIC PLAN; REPORT

14           (a) The Director of Health Care Reform, in connection with the advisory  
15           group established pursuant to 18 V.S.A. § 9491(b) in Sec. 1 of this act, shall  
16           update the health care workforce strategic plan as set forth in 18 V.S.A. § 9491  
17           and shall submit a draft of the plan to the Green Mountain Care Board for its  
18           review and approval on or before December 1, 2020. The Board shall review  
19           and approve the plan within 30 days following receipt.

20           (b) On or before January 15, 2021, the Director shall provide the updated  
21           health care workforce strategic plan to the House Committees on Health Care

1 and on Commerce and Economic Development and the Senate Committees on  
2 Health and Welfare and on Economic Development, Housing and General  
3 Affairs.

4 Sec. 3. 18 V.S.A. § 33 is added to read:

5 § 33. MEDICAL STUDENTS; PRIMARY CARE

6 (a) The Department of Health, in collaboration with the Office of Primary  
7 Care and Area Health Education Centers Program at the University of Vermont  
8 College of Medicine (AHEC), shall establish a rural primary care physician  
9 scholarship program. The scholarships shall cover the medical school tuition  
10 for up to five third-year and up to five fourth-year medical students annually  
11 who commit to practicing primary care in a rural, health professional shortage  
12 or medically underserved area of this State. For each academic year of tuition  
13 covered by the scholarship, the recipient shall incur an obligation of two years  
14 of full-time service or four years of half-time service. Students receiving a  
15 scholarship for their third year of medical school shall be eligible to receive  
16 another scholarship for their fourth year of medical school. The amount of  
17 each scholarship shall be set at the in-state tuition rate less any other State or  
18 federal educational grant assistance the student receives for the same academic  
19 year.

20 (b) Approved specialties shall be all of the specialties recognized by the  
21 National Health Service Corps at the time of the scholarship award, which may

1 include family medicine, internal medicine, pediatrics, obstetrics-gynecology,  
2 and psychiatry.

3 (c) A scholarship recipient who does not fulfill the commitment to practice  
4 primary care in accordance with the terms of the award shall be liable for  
5 repayment of the full amount of the scholarship, plus interest calculated in  
6 accordance with the formula determined by the National Health Service Corps  
7 for failure to complete a service obligation under that program.

8 Sec. 4. RURAL PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIAN SCHOLARSHIP  
9 PROGRAM; APPROPRIATION

10 (a) The sum of \$811,226.00 in Global Commitment investment funds is  
11 appropriated to the Department of Health in fiscal year 2021 for scholarships  
12 for medical students who commit to practicing in a rural, health professional  
13 shortage or medically underserved area of this State in accordance with 18  
14 V.S.A. § 33.

15 (b) It is the intent of the General Assembly that scholarship funds to  
16 expand Vermont's primary care physician workforce should continue to be  
17 appropriated in future years to ensure that Vermonters have access to necessary  
18 health care services, preferably in their own communities.

1       Sec. 5. EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE; NURSING STUDENTS;

2                   APPROPRIATION

3           (a) The sum of \$1,381,276.00 in Global Commitment investment funds is  
4 appropriated to the Department of Health for additional scholarships for  
5 nursing students pursuant to the program established in 18 V.S.A. § 31, as  
6 redesignated by Sec. 7 of this act, and administered by the Vermont Student  
7 Assistance Corporation.

8           (b)(1) First priority for the scholarship funds shall be given to students  
9 pursuing a practical nursing certificate who will be eligible to sit for the  
10 NCLEX-PN examination upon completion of the certificate.

11           (2) Second priority for the scholarship funds shall be given to students  
12 pursuing an associate's degree in nursing who will be eligible to sit for the  
13 NCLEX-RN examination upon graduation.

14           (3) Third priority for the scholarship funds shall be given to students  
15 pursuing a bachelor of science degree in nursing.

16           (c) To be eligible for a scholarship under this section, applicants shall:

17           (1) demonstrate financial need;

18           (2) demonstrate academic capacity by carrying at least a 2.5 grade point  
19 average in their course of study prior to receiving the fund award; and

20           (3) agree to work as a nurse in Vermont for a minimum of one year  
21 following licensure for each year of scholarship awarded.

1       (d) Students attending an accredited postsecondary educational institution  
2       in Vermont shall receive first preference for scholarships.

3       (e) There shall be no deadline to apply for a scholarship under this section.  
4       Scholarships shall be awarded on a rolling basis as long as funds are available,  
5       and any funds remaining at the end of fiscal year 2021 shall roll over and shall  
6       be available to the Department of Health in fiscal year 2022 for additional  
7       scholarships as described in this section.

8       (f) It is the intent of the General Assembly that scholarship funds to expand  
9       Vermont’s nursing workforce should continue to be appropriated in future  
10       years to ensure that Vermonters have access to necessary health care services,  
11       preferably in their own communities.

12       Sec. 6. 18 V.S.A. chapter 1 is amended to read:

13       CHAPTER 1. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH; GENERAL PROVISIONS

14                       Subchapter 1. General Provisions

15       § 1. GENERAL POWERS OF DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

16                                       \* \* \*

17                       Subchapter 2. Health Care Professions; Educational Assistance

18                                       \* \* \*

19       Sec. 7. REDESIGNATIONS

20       (a) 18 V.S.A. § 10 (educational assistance; incentives; nurses) is  
21       redesignated to be 18 V.S.A. § 31 in 18 V.S.A. chapter 1, subchapter 2.



1           (b) 18 V.S.A. § 10a (loan repayment for health care providers and Health  
2           Care Educational Loan Repayment Fund) is redesignated to be 18 V.S.A. § 32  
3           in 18 V.S.A. chapter 1, subchapter 2.

4           Sec. 8. EFFECTIVE DATE

5           This act shall take effect on July 1, 2020.

6           and that after passage the title of the bill be amended to read: “An act  
7           relating to increasing the supply of nurses and primary care providers in  
8           Vermont”

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13           (Committee vote: \_\_\_\_\_)

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Representative \_\_\_\_\_

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FOR THE COMMITTEE