

Possible Senate Appropriations amendment for committee discussion

TO THE HONORABLE SENATE:

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

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

§ 9491. HEALTH CARE WORKFORCE; STRATEGIC PLAN

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

(b)(1) ~~The~~ In maintaining the strategic plan, the Director or designee shall collaborate with the area health education centers, ~~the State Workforce~~

1 ~~Development Board established in 10 V.S.A. § 541a, the Prekindergarten~~
2 ~~Council established in 16 V.S.A. § 2905, the Department of Labor, the~~
3 ~~Department of Health, the Department of Vermont Health Access, and other~~
4 ~~interested parties to develop and maintain the plan~~ consult with an advisory
5 group composed of the following **seven nine** members, at least one of whom
6 shall be a nurse, to develop and maintain the strategic plan:

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

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

10 (C) one representative of the Area Health Education Centers’
11 workforce initiative;

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

13 (E) one representative of Vermont hospitals;

14 (F) one representative of physicians;

15 **(G) one representative of naturopathic physicians;**

16 **(H) one representative of home health agencies; and**

17 (I) one representative of long-term care facilities.

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

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

4 (1) the current capacity and capacity issues of the health care workforce
5 and delivery system in Vermont, including the shortages of health care
6 professionals, specialty practice areas that regularly face shortages of qualified
7 health care professionals, issues with geographic access to services, and unmet
8 health care needs of Vermonters;

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

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

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

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

1 ~~(3)~~ how State government, universities and colleges, the State’s
2 educational system, entities providing education and training programs related
3 to the health care workforce, and others may develop the resources in the
4 health care workforce and delivery system to educate, recruit, and retain health
5 care professionals to achieve Vermont’s health care reform principles and
6 purposes; and

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

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

13 ~~(6)~~(3) assessing the availability of State and federal funds for health care
14 workforce development.

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

18 [Repealed.]

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

20 (a) The Director of Health Care Reform, in connection with the advisory
21 group established pursuant to 18 V.S.A. § 9491(b) in Sec. 1 of this act, shall

1 update the health care workforce strategic plan as set forth in 18 V.S.A. § 9491
2 and shall submit a draft of the plan to the Green Mountain Care Board for its
3 review and approval on or before December 1, 2020. The Board shall review
4 and approve the plan within 30 days following receipt.

5 (b) On or before January 15, 2021, the Director shall provide the updated
6 health care workforce strategic plan to the House Committees on Health Care
7 and on Commerce and Economic Development and the Senate Committees on
8 Health and Welfare and on Economic Development, Housing and General
9 Affairs.

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

11 § 33. MEDICAL STUDENTS; PRIMARY CARE

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

1 another scholarship for their fourth year of medical school. The amount of
2 each scholarship shall be set at the in-state tuition rate less any other State or
3 federal educational grant assistance the student receives for the same academic
4 year.

5 (b) Approved specialties shall be all of the specialties recognized by the
6 National Health Service Corps at the time of the scholarship award, which may
7 include family medicine, internal medicine, pediatrics, obstetrics-gynecology,
8 and psychiatry.

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

14 Sec. 4. RURAL PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIAN SCHOLARSHIP
15 PROGRAM; APPROPRIATION

16 (a) The sum of \$811,226.00 in Global Commitment investment funds is
17 appropriated to the Department of Health in fiscal year 2021 for scholarships
18 for medical students who commit to practicing in a rural, health professional
19 shortage or medically underserved area of this State in accordance with
20 18 V.S.A. § 33.

1 **(b)(1) It is the intent of the General Assembly that scholarship funds to**
2 **expand Vermont's primary care physician workforce should continue to**
3 **be appropriated in future years** **The Director of Health Care Reform in**
4 **the Agency of Human Services, in consultation with the Department of**
5 **Health, the University of Vermont College of Medicine, and the advisory**
6 **group established in 18 V.S.A. § 9491(b), shall identify funding sources**
7 **from existing State budget allocations or new revenue sources to provide**
8 **the State match in future fiscal years** **for scholarship funds to expand**
9 **Vermont's primary care physician workforce** to ensure that Vermonters
10 have access to necessary health care services, preferably in their own
11 communities.

12 **(2) On or before March 1, 2021, the Director of Health Care Reform**
13 **shall report to the House Committees on Appropriations and on Health**
14 **Care and the Senate Committees on Appropriations and on Health and**
15 **Welfare the funding sources identified to provide the ongoing State match**
16 **for the primary care physician scholarship program.**

17 Sec. 5. EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE; NURSING STUDENTS;

18 APPROPRIATION

19 (a) The sum of \$1,381,276.00 in Global Commitment investment funds is
20 appropriated to the Department of Health for additional scholarships for
21 nursing students pursuant to the program established in 18 V.S.A. § 31, as

1 redesignated by Sec. 7 of this act, and administered by the Vermont Student
2 Assistance Corporation.

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

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

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

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

12 (1) demonstrate financial need;

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

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

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

19 (e) There shall be no deadline to apply for a scholarship under this section.
20 Scholarships shall be awarded on a rolling basis as long as funds are available,
21 and any funds remaining at the end of fiscal year 2021 shall roll over and shall

1 be available to the Department of Health in fiscal year 2022 for additional
2 scholarships as described in this section.

3 (f) It is the intent of the General Assembly that scholarship funds to
4 expand Vermont's nursing workforce should continue to be appropriated
5 in future years. The Director of Health Care Reform in the Agency of
6 Human Services, in consultation with the Department of Health, the
7 Agency of Commerce and Community Development, and the advisory
8 group established in 18 V.S.A. § 9491(b), shall identify the primary causes
9 of Vermont's nursing workforce shortage and shall propose solutions to
10 address those causes. On or before [date], the Director of Health Care
11 Reform shall submit his or her findings and recommendations to the
12 House Committees on Appropriations and on Health Care and the Senate
13 Committees on Appropriations and on Health and Welfare, including:

14 (1) an assessment of the existing nursing career ladders at health
15 care facilities in this State and their relationships with programs at
16 Vermont's institutions of higher education;

17 (2) a review of analyses and reports of other states' barriers to
18 expanding their nursing workforces and the solutions identified and
19 successfully implemented in those states; and

20 (3) in the event that inadequate scholarship funding is identified as a
21 barrier to expanding Vermont's nursing workforce, proposals for existing

1 State budget allocations or new revenue sources that can be used for
2 nursing scholarships to ensure that Vermonters have access to necessary
3 health care services, preferably in their own communities.

4 Sec. 5a. 2018 (Sp. Sess.) Acts and Resolves No. 11, Sec. C.106.1 is
5 amended to read:

6 Sec. C.106.1 EXPANDING THE VERMONT WORKFORCE FOR
7 SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER TREATMENT AND
8 MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

9 (a) The sum of \$5,000,000 is appropriated from the Tobacco Litigation
10 Settlement Fund to the Agency of Human Services in fiscal year 2018 and
11 shall carry forward for the uses and based on the allocations set forth in
12 subsections (b) and (c) of this section. The purpose of the funds is to make
13 strategic investments in order to expand the supply of high-quality
14 substance use disorder treatment and mental health professionals
15 available to Vermont residents in need of their services.

16 (b) The sum appropriated to the Agency of Human Services in
17 subsection (a) of this section shall be allocated to the Agency as follows:

18 (1) \$1,500,000 for fiscal year 2019, which shall not be distributed
19 until the Agency provides proposed expenditures as part of its fiscal year
20 2019 budget adjustment request;

1 § 1. GENERAL POWERS OF DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

2 * * *

3 Subchapter 2. Health Care Professions; Educational Assistance

4 * * *

5 Sec. 7. REDESIGNATIONS

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

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

11 **Sec. 7a. REPEAL**

12 **18 V.S.A. § 33 (medical students; primary care) is repealed on July 1,**
13 **2022.**

14 Sec. 8. EFFECTIVE DATE

15 This act shall take effect on ~~July~~ **November** 1, 2020.

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19 (Committee vote: _____)

20

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Senator _____

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FOR THE COMMITTEE