

1 TO THE HONORABLE SENATE:

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

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

9 § 9491. HEALTH CARE WORKFORCE; STRATEGIC PLAN

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

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

1 Council established in 16 V.S.A. § 2905, the Department of Labor, the  
2 Department of Health, the Department of Vermont Health Access, and other  
3 interested parties to develop and maintain the plan consult with an advisory  
4 group composed of the following **seven 11** members, at least one of whom  
5 shall be a nurse, to develop and maintain the strategic plan:

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

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

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

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

12 (E) one representative of Vermont hospitals;

13 (F) one representative of physicians;

14 (G) **one representative of mental health professionals;**

15 **(H) one representative of dentists;**

16 **(I) one representative of naturopathic physicians;**

17 **(J) one representative of home health agencies; and**

18 **(K)** one representative of long-term care facilities.

19 (2) The Director or designee shall serve as the chair of the advisory  
20 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~~ **July 1, 2021**. The Board  
4 shall review and approve the plan within 30 days following receipt.

5 (b) On or before ~~January~~ **August** 15, 2021, the Director shall provide the  
6 updated health care workforce strategic plan to the House Committees **on**  
7 **Appropriations**, on Health Care, and on Commerce and Economic  
8 Development and the Senate Committees **on Appropriations**, on Health and  
9 Welfare, and on Economic Development, Housing and General 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, **area of this State or in a**  
18 **Vermont federally qualified health center's service area, in a setting or**  
19 **practice not owned by an academic medical center ~~health professional~~**  
20 **shortage or medically underserved area of this State**. For each academic  
21 year of tuition covered by the scholarship, the recipient shall incur an

1 obligation of two years of full-time service or four years of half-time service.  
2 Students receiving a scholarship for their third year of medical school shall be  
3 eligible to receive another scholarship for their fourth year of medical school.  
4 The amount of each scholarship shall be set at the in-state tuition rate less any  
5 other State or federal educational grant assistance the student receives for the  
6 same academic year.

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

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

16 Sec. 4. **RURAL** PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIAN SCHOLARSHIP  
17 PROGRAM; APPROPRIATION

18 (a) The sum of ~~\$811,226.00~~ \$608,419.00 in Global Commitment  
19 investment funds is appropriated to the Department of Health in fiscal year  
20 2021 for scholarships for medical students who commit to practicing **primary**

1 care in a rural, health professional shortage or medically underserved  
2 area of this State in accordance with 18 V.S.A. § 33.

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

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

18 Sec. 5. EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE; NURSING STUDENTS;

19 APPROPRIATION

20 (a) The sum of \$1,381,276.00 \$1,035,957.00 in Global Commitment  
21 investment funds is appropriated to the Department of Health for additional

1 scholarships for nursing students pursuant to the program established in 18  
2 V.S.A. § 31, as redesignated by Sec. 7 of this act, and administered by the  
3 Vermont Student Assistance Corporation.

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

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

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

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

13 (1) demonstrate financial need;

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

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

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

20 (e) There shall be no deadline to apply for a scholarship under this section.

21 Scholarships shall be awarded on a rolling basis as long as funds are available,



1 and any funds remaining at the end of fiscal year 2021 shall roll over and shall  
2 be available to the Department of Health in fiscal year 2022 for additional  
3 scholarships as described in this section.

4 (f) It is the intent of the General Assembly that scholarship funds to  
5 expand Vermont's nursing workforce should continue to be appropriated  
6 in future years. The Director of Health Care Reform in the Agency of  
7 Human Services, in consultation with the Department of Health, the  
8 Agency of Commerce and Community Development, and the advisory  
9 group established in 18 V.S.A. § 9491(b), shall identify the primary causes  
10 of Vermont's nursing workforce shortage and shall propose solutions to  
11 address those causes. On or before March 1, 2021, the Director of Health  
12 Care Reform shall submit his or her findings and recommendations to the  
13 House Committees on Appropriations and on Health Care and the Senate  
14 Committees on Appropriations and on Health and Welfare, including:

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

18 (2) other states' successful strategies for expanding their nursing  
19 workforces; 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 **Sec. 5b. VERMONT TRAINING PROGRAM; REVERSION**

2 **In fiscal year 2021, \$200,000.00 of the funds appropriated to the**  
3 **Department of Economic Development for the Vermont Training**  
4 **Program shall revert to the General Fund.**

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

6 CHAPTER 1. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH; GENERAL PROVISIONS

7 Subchapter 1. General Provisions

8 § 1. GENERAL POWERS OF DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

9 \* \* \*

10 Subchapter 2. Health Care Professions; Educational Assistance

11 \* \* \*

12 Sec. 7. REDESIGNATIONS

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

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

18 **Sec. 7a. SUNSET**

19 **18 V.S.A. § 33 (medical students; primary care) is repealed on July 1,**  
20 **2022.**

21 Sec. 8. EFFECTIVE DATE

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

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5        (Committee vote: \_\_\_\_\_)

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\_\_\_\_\_

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Senator \_\_\_\_\_

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FOR THE COMMITTEE

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