

1 TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

2 The Committee on Commerce and Economic Development to which was  
3 referred House Bill No. 703 entitled “An act relating to promoting workforce  
4 development” respectfully reports that it has considered the same and  
5 recommends that the bill be amended by striking out all after the enacting  
6 clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

7 Sec. 1. IMMEDIATE RESPONSE TO CRITICAL WORKFORCE  
8 SHORTAGES; PRIORITIZING HEALTH AND SAFETY;  
9 APPROPRIATIONS

10 In fiscal year 2023 the following amounts are appropriated from the General  
11 Fund to the following recipients for the purposes specified:

12 (1) \$1,000,000.00 for program funding for mental health nursing  
13 programs:

14 (A) \$500,000.00 to the University of Vermont; and

15 (B) \$500,000.00 to Vermont State University.

16 (2) \$6,000,000.00 to Vermont State University to double the nursing  
17 program capacity.

18 (3) \$3,000,000.00 to the University of Vermont to scale up its nursing  
19 program by 50 percent.

20 (4) \$2,000,000.00 to the Agency of Human Services for project  
21 management, stakeholder participation, and implementation costs of the Health

1 Care Workforce Development Strategic Plan, exclusive of financial incentive  
2 programs.

3 Sec. 2. IMMEDIATE STRATEGIES AND FUNDING FOR EXPANDING  
4 THE LABOR FORCE; INCREASING THE NUMBER OF  
5 PARTICIPANTS AND PARTICIPATION RATES;  
6 APPROPRIATIONS

7 In fiscal year 2023 the following amounts are appropriated from the General  
8 Fund to the following recipients for the purposes specified:

9 (1) \$5,000,000.00 to the University of Vermont Office of Engagement,  
10 in consultation with the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation, to  
11 administer a statewide forgivable loan program of \$5,000.00 per graduate for  
12 recent college graduates across all Vermont higher education institutions who  
13 commit to work in Vermont for two years after graduation.

14 (2) \$3,000,000.00 to the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation to  
15 administer up to \$3,000.00 per individual for tuition costs incurred for  
16 Vermont-based internships.

17 (3) \$2,000,000.00 to the State Refugee Office to administer as grants to  
18 refugee- or New American-focused programs working in Vermont, to support  
19 increased in-migration or retention of recent arrivals.

20 (4) \$387,000.00 to Vermont Technical College to develop a skilled meat  
21 cutter training and apprenticeship facility.

1 Sec. 3. [Justice-involved]

2 Sec. 4. [H.483 Language]

3 Sec. 5. INVESTMENT IN THE UP-SKILLING OF PRIVATE SECTOR

4 EMPLOYERS TO SUPPORT THE EVOLUTION OF BUSINESS

5 AND ORGANIZATIONAL MODELS; APPROPRIATIONS

6 In fiscal year 2023 the amount of \$500,000.00 is appropriated from the  
7 General Fund to the Agency of Commerce and Community Development to  
8 regrant a performance-based contract to the Vermont Professionals of Color  
9 Network for statewide delivery of business coaching and other forms of  
10 training to BIPOC business owners, networking and special convenings, and  
11 career fairs, workshops and paid internships, career guidance, and other  
12 support for BIPOC workers across the State.

13 (5) Update Vermont Training Program criteria for eligibility to allow  
14 training and coaching for small business owners and their management teams  
15 to improve their capacity to evolve and lead their small businesses and  
16 increase base funding for this program to \$2.5 million per year.

17 Sec. 6. INVESTMENT IN NEW MODELS OF CONNECTION-BUILDING

18 ACROSS PUBLIC AND PRIVATE STAKEHOLDERS TO

19 IMPROVE ALIGNMENT, COLLABORATION, INSIGHTS, AND

20 STRATEGY; APPROPRIATIONS

1       In fiscal year 2023 the amount of \$3,000,000.00 is appropriated from the  
2       General Fund to the Agency of Commerce and Community Development to  
3       make a performance-based grant to a nonprofit to serve as a statewide  
4       Connecting Organization, which shall:

5           (1) create, convene, and administer a Vermont Workforce Network;

6           (2) provide sub-grant, performance-based awards to six regional  
7       Workforce-Education Business Councils, each of whom will employ a full-  
8       time regional Navigator; and

9           (3) coordinate with the implementation of VDOL Pilot Project of  
10       Workforce Expansion Specialists in six regions of the State.

11       Sec. 7. REGIONAL WORKFORCE EXPANSION SYSTEM

12       (a) Regional Workforce Expansion System. The amount of \$3,000,000 is  
13       appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Labor to launch and  
14       lead a coordinated regional system to support the State's workforce expansion  
15       efforts. The system will be designed to:

16           (1) Support employers in tailoring their work requirements, conditions,  
17       and expectations to better access local workers.

18           (2) Collaborate with local education and training providers and regional  
19       workforce partners, to create and regularly distribute data related to local labor  
20       force supply and demand.

1           (3) Create and share work-based learning and training opportunities with  
2           secondary and post-secondary students, local workforce expansion partners,  
3           and others interested in starting or advancing in their career.

4           (b) System Infrastructure.

5           (1) The Vermont Department of Labor will make investments that  
6           improve and expand regional capacity to connect supply (workers) and  
7           demand (employment) in real-time.

8           (2) The Department will place six state-funded Workforce Expansion  
9           Specialists in the Barre, Bennington, Brattleboro, Rutland, St. Albans and St.  
10           Johnsbury areas. These limited-service, full-time-employees will report to the  
11           Workforce Development Division.

12           (c) Coordination.

13           (1) The Department shall co-convene regular, regional meetings of  
14           education, training, business, and service provider partners; coordinate local  
15           workforce information collection and distribution, assist with pilot projects,  
16           provide targeted sector support, and develop localized career resources such as  
17           information for career counseling, local job fairs, career expos, available to a  
18           wide range of stakeholders.

19           (2) The Department shall develop labor market information reports by  
20           CTE district to support discussion and decision making that will address local

1 labor market challenges and opportunities and support a regional approach to  
2 solving local or unique labor supply challenges.

3 (d) Report. On, or before, December 15, 2024, the Department shall  
4 provide a narrative update on the progress made in hiring staff, establishing  
5 interagency agreements, developing regional information exchange systems,  
6 and serving jobseekers and employers, to the House and Senate Committees of  
7 Jurisdiction. The report will also recommend ongoing metrics that can be  
8 easily recorded and reported at the local and state levels on a regular basis to  
9 meet multiple information needs.

10 (e) Implementation. The Department of Labor shall begin implementing the  
11 Regional Workforce Expansion System on or before August 1, 2022.

12 Sec. 8. REPEAL

13 10 V.S.A. §§ 544 and 545 are repealed.

14 Sec. 9. WORK BASED LEARNING AND TRAINING PROGRAM

15 (a) Vermont Work Based Learning and Training Program. The Department  
16 of Labor shall develop a statewide Work Based Learning and Training  
17 Program that serves transitioning secondary and postsecondary students and  
18 Vermonters seeking work-based experience as part of career change. This  
19 program will be designed to:

1           (1) Support Vermonters who are graduating from post-secondary  
2           education or a secondary CTE program or who are pursuing a career change  
3           with a paid on-the-job work experience lasting twelve weeks or less,

4           (2) Establish a statewide platform available to all employers to list their  
5           internships, returnships, pre-apprenticeships, and Registered Apprenticeship  
6           opportunities and for jobseekers to view and access information about specific  
7           opportunities; and to

8           (3) Support employers by providing them with assistance in developing  
9           and implementing meaningful work-based learning and training opportunities.

10           (b) Definitions.

11           (1) As used in this section, "internship" means a work-based learning  
12           experience with an employer where the participant may, but does not  
13           necessarily, receive academic credit.

14           (2) "Returnship" means an on-the-job learning experience for an  
15           individual who is returning to the workforce after an extended absence or is  
16           seeking a limited-duration on-the-job work experience in a different  
17           occupation or occupational setting as part of a career change.

18           (3) "Pre-apprenticeship" is a program of combined learning and work-  
19           based experiences that lead to an informal apprenticeship or formal registered  
20           apprenticeship program.

1           (4) “Registered Apprenticeship” is a program approved by the VDOL as  
2           a federally recognized apprenticeship program.

3           (c) Funding made available for this program may be used to:

4           (1) Build and administer the program,

5           (2) Develop an online platform that will connect students and jobseekers  
6           with work-based learning and training opportunities within Vermont

7           (3) Support work-based learning and training opportunities with public  
8           and private employers available to prospective workers located in or relocating  
9           to Vermont.

10           (4) Promote work-based learning and training as a valuable component  
11           of a talent pipeline, and

12           (5) Assist employers in developing meaningful work-based learning and  
13           training opportunities.

14           (d) The Department of Labor shall collect data and establish program goals  
15           and performance measures that demonstrate program results for activities  
16           funded through the Vermont Work Based Learning and Training Program.

17           (e) The Department of Labor will engage appropriate agencies and  
18           departments of the State in the Work Based Learning and Training Program to  
19           expand these opportunities with State government and with entities awarded  
20           State contracts.



1        (f) Reporting: By February 15, 2022, the Vermont Department of Labor  
2        will report on recommended metrics for measuring program performance to  
3        the relevant committees of jurisdiction.

4        Sec. 10. THE VERMONT TRADES SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

5        (a) The Vermont Trades Scholarship Program is created and shall be  
6        administered by the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation. The Vermont  
7        Student Assistance Corporation shall disburse tuition payments under the  
8        Program on behalf of eligible individuals, subject to the appropriation of funds  
9        by the General Assembly for this purpose.

10       (b) To be eligible for a scholarship under the Program, an individual,  
11       whether a resident or nonresident, shall:

12           (1) be enrolled in an industry recognized training and certification  
13           program that leads to initial employment or career advancement in a building,  
14           mechanical, industrial, or medical trade;

15           (2) demonstrate financial need;

16           (3) register with the Vermont Department of Labor for the purpose of  
17           receiving relevant job referrals, if unemployed; and

18           (4) agree to work in their profession in Vermont for a minimum of one  
19           year following licensure or certification completion for each year of  
20           scholarship awarded.

1        (c)(1) The Corporation shall give preference to students attending a  
2        Vermont-based training program or, if one isn't available for their certification,  
3        an offer of employment or promotion from a Vermont employer upon  
4        completion.

5        (2) The Corporation shall give priority to applicants who have not  
6        received other assistance.

7        (d) There shall be no deadline to apply for a scholarship under this section.  
8        Scholarships shall be awarded on a rolling basis if funds are available, and any  
9        funds remaining at the end of a fiscal year shall roll over and shall be available  
10       to the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation in the following fiscal year to  
11       award additional scholarships as set forth in this section.

12       (e) The sum of \$3,000,000.00 in base General Funds is appropriated to the  
13       Vermont Student Assistance Corporation for scholarships for trades students  
14       under the Vermont Trades Scholarship Program.

15       Sec. 11. THE VERMONT TRADES LOAN REIMBURSEMENT  
16       PROGRAM

17       (a) The Vermont Trades Loan Repayment Reimbursement Program is  
18       created and shall be administered by the Vermont Student Assistance  
19       Corporation. The Vermont Student Assistance Corporation shall disburse  
20       funds under the Program to eligible individuals, subject to the appropriation of  
21       funds by the General Assembly for this purpose.

1        (b) To be eligible for loan repayment under the Program, an individual,

2        shall:

3            (1) be a Vermont resident

4            (2) be employed in an occupation in the building, mechanical, industrial,

5        or medical trades for an average of at least 30 hours per week for least one full

6        calendar year before applying.

7        (c) For every year of work in a qualifying occupation, an individual shall

8        be eligible for up to \$5,000 in loan repayment reimbursement.

9        Reimbursements shall not exceed the total amount of educational debt owed.

10       (d) There shall be no deadline to apply for loan repayment reimbursement

11       under this section. Loan repayment shall be awarded on a rolling basis if funds

12       are available, and any funds remaining at the end of a fiscal year shall roll over

13       and shall be available to the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation in the

14       following fiscal year to award additional loan repayment as set forth in this

15       section.

16       (e) The sum of \$500,000 in base General Funds is appropriated to the

17       Vermont Student Assistance Corporation for loan repayment for trades

18       professionals under the Vermont Trades Loan Repayment Program.

19       Sec. 12. CTE CONSTRUCTION AND REHABILITATION

20       EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING PROGRAM; REVOLVING LOAN FUND

1        (a) Purpose. This section authorizes and provides funding for a CTE  
2        Construction and Rehabilitation Experiential Learning Program and Revolving  
3        Loan Fund, the purposes of which are to:

4            (1) expand the experiential and educational opportunities for high school  
5        and adult CTE students to work directly on construction projects;

6            (2) build community partnerships among CTE centers, housing  
7        organizations, government, and private businesses;

8            (3) beautify communities and rehabilitate buildings that are  
9        underperforming assets;

10          (4) expand housing access to Vermonters in communities throughout the  
11        State; and

12          (5) improve property values while teaching high school and adult  
13        students trade skills.

14          (b) Appropriation; creation of fund; administration.

15            (1) In fiscal year 2023 the amount of \$15,000,000.00 is appropriated  
16        from the Education Fund to the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board to  
17        create and administer a CTE Construction and Rehabilitation Experiential  
18        Learning Program and Revolving Loan Fund pursuant to this section.

19            (2) The Board may use not more than five percent of the Fund for its  
20        costs of administration.

21          (c) Proposals; applications; funding.

1           (1) A regional CTE center, working in collaboration with one or more  
2           housing and community partners, private businesses, nonprofit organizations,  
3           or municipalities, shall identify construction projects that would be relevant  
4           and appropriate for CTE students enrolled in construction, electrical,  
5           plumbing, design, business management, or other CTE programs, including:

6                   (A) rehabilitation of residential properties that are blighted or not  
7                   code-compliant;

8                   (B) new residential construction projects or improvements to land in  
9                   cases of critical community need; and

10                   (C) commercial construction projects that have substantial  
11                   community benefit.

12           (2) Prior to or during the application process, a CTE center and its  
13           partners may consult with the Board to identify and consider potential funding  
14           partners to leverage amounts available through the Fund.

15           (3) A CTE center and its partners shall apply to the Board for funding  
16           by submitting a project application that includes the information required by  
17           the Board and addresses the following:

18                   (A) the educational benefits for students and fit with the CTE  
19                   curriculum;

20                   (B) the community benefits for the neighborhood, municipality, or  
21                   region in which the project is located; and

1           (C) the partners with whom the CTE center is collaborating and the  
2 respective responsibility for the aspects of a project, including:

3           (i) educational instruction and academic credit;

4           (ii) project management;

5           (iii) insurance coverage for students and the property;

6           (iv) compensation and benefits, including compliance with labor  
7 laws, standards, and practices; and

8           (v) property acquisition, ownership, and transfer.

9           (3) A CTE center may use funding for, and shall specify in its  
10 application the allocation of costs associated with:

11           (A) acquisition, design, permitting, construction, marketing, and  
12 other building-related expenses; and

13           (B) costs for labor, including for student wages and for instructor  
14 compensation during the academic year as well as for summer or other work  
15 that is not otherwise budgeted during the academic year;

16           (d) Eligibility; review; approval. The Board may approve an application  
17 that includes the information required by subsection (c) of this section and  
18 provide funding for a project that meets the following eligibility criteria:

19           (1) The project involves the rehabilitation of blighted or otherwise non-  
20 code compliant property, or new residential construction projects or

1 improvements to land in cases of critical need, and results in a building with  
2 not more than four residential dwelling units.

3 (2) The project includes a weatherization component.

4 (3) Students working on the project receive academic credit, a  
5 competitive wage, or both.

6 (e) Affordability; flexibility. If appropriate in the circumstances, the Board  
7 may condition funding for a project on the inclusion of one or mechanisms  
8 addressing the affordability of the property upon rent or sale.

9 (f) Funding; proceeds; revolving loans.

10 (1) The Board shall provide funding for projects from the amounts  
11 available in the Fund in the form of zero-interest loans, in an amount, for a  
12 period, and upon terms specified by the Board.

13 (2) The Board shall return to the Fund any proceeds realized to provide  
14 funding for future projects.

15 (g) Report. The Board shall address the implementation of this section in  
16 its annual report to the General Assembly.

17 \* \* \* Health Care Workforce \* \* \*

18 Sec. A. HEALTH CARE WORKFORCE; LEGISLATIVE INTENT

19 (a) The General Assembly values all health care workers, at every level and  
20 in each component of the health care system. The General Assembly also  
21 acknowledges the many struggles faced by health care workers and that the

1 pandemic has placed further strain on an already taxed system. Many health  
2 care workers have not had their pay adjusted over time to address increases in  
3 the cost of living, essentially amounting to pay cuts from year to year. Health  
4 care workers have experienced burnout, trauma, and moral injuries due to a  
5 history of underfunding and the present stress of the pandemic.

6 (b) In order to retain and recruit health care workers in Vermont, it is the  
7 intent of the General Assembly to invest in multiple solutions aimed at  
8 reinforcing our health care workforce in the present and sustaining our health  
9 care workers into the future.

10 Sec. B. EMERGENCY GRANTS TO SUPPORT NURSE EDUCATORS

11 (a) The sum of \$3,000,000.00 is appropriated to the Department of Health  
12 from General Fund in fiscal year 2023 and shall carry forward for the purpose  
13 of providing emergency interim grants to Vermont's nursing schools over three  
14 years to increase the compensation for their nurse faculty and staff, with  
15 \$1,000,000.00 to be distributed in each of fiscal years 2023, 2024, and 2025 to  
16 increase the compensation for each full-time-equivalent (FTE) member of the  
17 clinical and didactic nurse faculty and staff. The Department shall distribute  
18 the funds among the nursing schools in Vermont equitably based on each  
19 school's proportion of nursing faculty and staff to the total number of FTE  
20 nursing faculty and staff across all nursing schools statewide.



1       (b) If the nurse faculty or staff, or both, of a nursing school receiving a  
2       grant under this section are subject to a collective bargaining agreement, the  
3       use of the grant funds provided to the nursing school for those faculty or staff,  
4       or both, shall be subject to impact bargaining between the nursing school and  
5       the collective bargaining representative of the nurse faculty or staff, or both, to  
6       the extent required by the applicable collective bargaining agreement.

7       Sec. C. NURSE PRECEPTOR INCENTIVE GRANTS; HOSPITALS;  
8       WORKING

9               GROUP; REPORT

10       (a)(1) The sum of \$2,400,000.00 is appropriated to the Agency of Human  
11       Services from the General Fund in fiscal year 2023 to provide incentive grants  
12       to hospital-employed nurses in Vermont to serve as preceptors for nursing  
13       students enrolled in Vermont nursing school programs. The Agency shall  
14       distribute the funds to hospitals employing nurses who provide student  
15       preceptor supervision based on the number of preceptor hours to be provided,  
16       at a rate of \$5.00 per preceptor hour, or a lesser hourly rate if the need exceeds  
17       the available funds.

18       (2) If nurse preceptors receiving compensation pursuant to a grant awarded  
19       to a hospital under this section are subject to a collective bargaining agreement,  
20       the use of the grant funds provided to the hospital for the nurse preceptors shall  
21       be subject to impact bargaining between the hospital and the collective

1 bargaining representative of the nurses to the extent required by the collective  
2 bargaining agreement.

3 (b)(1) The Director of Health Care Reform or designee in the Agency of  
4 Human Services shall convene a working group of stakeholders representing  
5 nursing schools, long-term care facilities, designated and specialized service  
6 agencies, federally qualified health centers, home health agencies, primary care  
7 practices, and other health care facilities to:

8 (A) identify ways to increase clinical placement opportunities across  
9 a variety of health care settings for nursing students enrolled in Vermont  
10 nursing school programs;

11 (B) establish sustainable funding models for compensating nurses  
12 serving as preceptors or for supporting the hiring of additional nurses to  
13 alleviate the pressures on nurse preceptors, or both; and

14 (C) develop an action plan for implementing the clinical placement  
15 expansion and sustainable funding models identified and established pursuant  
16 to subdivisions (A) and (B) of this subdivision (1), including addressing the  
17 need for student housing opportunities.

18 (2) On or before January 15, 2023, the Director of Health Care Reform  
19 shall provide the working group’s action plan and any recommendations for  
20 legislative action to the House Committees on Health Care, on Commerce and  
21 Economic Development, and on Appropriations and the Senate Committees on

1 Health and Welfare, on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs,  
2 and on Appropriations.

3 Sec. D. HEALTH CARE EMPLOYER NURSING PIPELINE AND  
4 APPRENTICESHIP  
5 PROGRAM

6 (a) The sum of \$3,000,000.00 is appropriated to the Vermont Student  
7 Assistance Corporation (VSAC) from the General Fund in fiscal year 2023 and  
8 shall carry forward for the purpose of providing grants to health care  
9 employers, including hospitals, long-term care facilities, designated and  
10 specialized service agencies, federally qualified health centers, and other health  
11 care providers, to establish or expand partnerships with Vermont nursing  
12 schools to create nursing pipeline or apprenticeship programs, or both, that will  
13 train members of the health care employers' existing staff, including personal  
14 care attendants, licensed nursing assistants, and licensed practical nurses, to  
15 become higher-level nursing professionals. Through a combination of  
16 scholarship awards, grants awarded to health care employers pursuant to this  
17 section, and the health care employer's contributions, the trainees' tuition and  
18 fees shall be covered in full, and trainees shall be provided with assistance in

1 meeting their living costs, such as housing and child care, while attending the  
2 program.

3 (b) In awarding grants pursuant to this section, VSAC shall give priority to  
4 health care employer proposals based on the following criteria:

5 (1) the extent to which the health care employer proposes to participate  
6 financially in the program;

7 (2) the extent of the health care employer's commitment to sustaining  
8 the program financially, including providing financial support for nurse  
9 preceptors, to create ongoing opportunities for educational advancement in  
10 nursing;

11 (3) the ability of the health care employer's staff to leverage nursing  
12 scholarship opportunities to maximize the reach of the grant funds;

13 (4) the employer's demonstrated ability to retain nursing students in the  
14 Vermont nursing workforce;

15 (5) the employer's geographic location, in order to ensure access to  
16 pipeline and apprenticeship programs for nursing staff across Vermont; and

17 (6) the employer's commitment to advancing the professional  
18 development of individuals from marginalized communities, especially those  
19 that have been historically disadvantaged in accessing educational  
20 opportunities and career advancement in the health care professions.

1        (c)(1) VSAC shall begin awarding grants under this section expeditiously  
2        in order to enable health care employer staff to begin enrolling in nursing  
3        school programs that commence in the fall of 2022.

4        (2) On or before September 15, 2022, VSAC shall provide an update to  
5        the Health Reform Oversight Committee on the status of program  
6        implementation.

7        Sec. E. 18 V.S.A. § 34 is added to read:

8        § 34. VERMONT NURSING SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

9        (a) The Vermont Nursing Scholarship Program is created and shall be  
10       administered by the Department of Health in collaboration with the Vermont  
11       Student Assistance Corporation. The Vermont Student Assistance Corporation  
12       shall disburse scholarship funds under the Program on behalf of eligible  
13       individuals, subject to the appropriation of funds by the General Assembly for  
14       this purpose.

15       (b) To be eligible for a scholarship under the Program, an individual,  
16       whether a resident or nonresident, shall:

17                (1) be enrolled at an approved postsecondary education institution as  
18        defined in 16 V.S.A. § 2822;

19                (2) demonstrate financial need;

1           (3) demonstrate academic capacity by carrying at least a 2.5 grade point  
2           average in the individual’s course of study prior to receiving the fund award;  
3           and

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

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

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

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

14           (4) Fourth priority shall be given to students pursuing graduate nursing  
15           education.

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

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

1 Corporation in the following fiscal year to award additional scholarships as set  
2 forth in this section.

3 Sec. F. REPEAL

4 18 V.S.A. § 31 (educational assistance; incentives; nurses) is repealed.

5 Sec. G. VERMONT NURSING SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM;

6 APPROPRIATION

7 The sum of \$3,000,000.00 in Global Commitment investment funds is  
8 appropriated to the Department of Health in fiscal year 2023 for scholarships  
9 for nursing students under the Vermont Nursing Scholarship Program  
10 established in Sec. E of this act.

11 Sec. H. 18 V.S.A. § 35 is added to read:

12 § 35. VERMONT NURSING LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM

13 (a) As used in this section:

14 (1) “Corporation” means the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation  
15 established in 16 V.S.A. § 2821.

16 (2) “Eligible individual” means an individual who satisfies the eligibility  
17 requirements for loan repayment under this section.

18 (3) “Eligible school” means an approved postsecondary education  
19 institution, as defined under 16 V.S.A. § 2822.

20 (4) “Loan repayment” means the cancellation and repayment of loans  
21 under this section.

1           (5) “Loans” means education loans guaranteed, made, financed,  
2           serviced, or otherwise administered by the Corporation under this subchapter  
3           for attendance at an eligible school.

4           (6) “Program” means the Vermont Nursing Loan Repayment Program  
5           created under this section.

6           (b) The Vermont Nursing Loan Repayment Program is created and shall be  
7           administered by the Department of Health in collaboration with the  
8           Corporation. The Program provides loan repayment on behalf of individuals  
9           who live and work as a nurse in this State and who meet the eligibility  
10           requirements in subsection (e) of this section.

11           (c) The loan repayment benefits provided under the Program shall be paid  
12           on behalf of the eligible individual by the Corporation, subject to the  
13           appropriation of funds by the General Assembly specifically for this purpose.

14           (d) To be eligible for loan repayment under the Program, an individual  
15           shall satisfy all of the following requirements:

16           (1) have graduated from an eligible school where the individual has,  
17           within the past five years, been awarded a nursing degree;

18           (2) had an overall 2.5 grade point average or better or the equivalent as  
19           determined by the Corporation if the eligible school does not use grade point  
20           averages from the eligible school;

21           (3) work as a nurse in this State; and



1           (4) be a resident of Vermont.

2           (f)(1) An eligible individual shall be entitled to an amount of loan  
3           cancellation and repayment under this section equal to one year of loans for  
4           every for one year of service as a nurse in this State.

5           (2) The Corporation shall award loan repayments in amounts that are  
6           sufficient to attract high-quality candidates while also making a meaningful  
7           increase in Vermont’s health care professional workforce.

8           (i) The Corporation shall adopt policies, procedures, and guidelines  
9           necessary to implement the provisions of this section.

10       Sec. I. VERMONT NURSING LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM;  
11       APPROPRIATION

12           The sum of \$2,000,000.00 is appropriated from the General Fund to the  
13           Department of Health in fiscal year 2023 for loan repayment for nurses under  
14           the Vermont Nursing Loan Repayment Program established in Sec. H of this  
15           act.

16       Sec. J. 18 V.S.A. § 36 is added to read:

17       § 36. NURSE EDUCATOR SCHOLARSHIP AND LOAN REPAYMENT  
18       PROGRAM

19           (a) Definitions. As used in this section:

20           (1) “Eligible individual” means an individual who satisfies the eligibility  
21           requirements under this section for a scholarship or loan repayment.

1           (2) “Eligible school” means an approved postsecondary education  
2           institution, as defined under 16 V.S.A. § 2822.

3           (3) “Gift aid” means grant or scholarship financial aid received from the  
4           federal government or from the State.

5           (4) “Loan repayment” means the cancellation and repayment of loans  
6           under this section.

7           (5) “Loans” means education loans guaranteed, made, financed,  
8           serviced, or otherwise administered by the Corporation under this subchapter  
9           for attendance at an eligible school.

10           (6) “Program” means the Nurse Educator Scholarship and Loan  
11           Repayment Program created under this section.

12           (7) “Scholarship” means a scholarship awarded under this section  
13           covering tuition, room, board, and the cost of required books and supplies for  
14           up to full-time attendance at an eligible school.

15           (b) Program creation. The Nurse Educator Scholarship and Loan  
16           Repayment Program is created and shall be administered by the Department of  
17           Health in collaboration with the Corporation. The Program provides  
18           scholarships to students enrolled in an eligible school who commit to working  
19           as a nurse educator at a nursing school in this State and who meet the  
20           eligibility requirements in subsection (d) of this section. The Program also  
21           provides loan repayment on behalf of individuals who work as nurse educators

1 at a nursing school in this State and who meet the eligibility requirements in  
2 subsection (e) of this section.

3 (c) The scholarship and loan repayment benefits provided under the  
4 Program shall be paid on behalf of the eligible individual by the Corporation,  
5 subject to the appropriation of funds by the General Assembly specifically for  
6 this purpose.

7 (d) Eligibility for scholarships. To be eligible for a scholarship under the  
8 Program, an individual, whether a resident or nonresident, shall satisfy all of  
9 the following requirements:

10 (1) be enrolled at an eligible school in a program that leads to a graduate  
11 degree in nursing;

12 (2) continually demonstrate satisfactory academic progress by  
13 maintaining a 2.5 grade point average or better or the equivalent as determined  
14 by the Corporation if the eligible school does not use grade point averages;

15 (3) have used any available gift aid;

16 (4) have executed a contract with the Corporation committing the  
17 individual to work as a nurse educator at a nursing school in this State;

18 (5) have executed a promissory note obligating the individual to repay  
19 the individual's scholarship benefit, in whole or in part, if the individual fails  
20 to complete the period of service required in subsection (f) of this section; and

1           (6) have completed the Program’s application form, the free application  
2           for federal student aid (FAFSA), and the Vermont grant application each  
3           academic year of enrollment in accordance with a schedule determined by the  
4           Corporation.

5           (e) Eligibility for loan repayment. To be eligible for loan repayment under  
6           the Program, an individual shall satisfy all of the following requirements:

7           (1) graduated from an eligible school where the individual has, within  
8           the past five years, been awarded a graduate degree in nursing;

9           (2) had an overall 2.5 grade point average or better or the equivalent as  
10          determined by the Corporation if the eligible school does not use grade point  
11          averages from the eligible school;

12          (3) work as a nurse educator at a nursing school in this State; and

13          (4) be a resident of Vermont.

14          (f) Service commitment.

15          (1) Scholarships. For each year of service as a nurse educator at a  
16          nursing school in this State, an eligible individual shall be entitled to a full  
17          academic year of full scholarship benefit under the Program. If an eligible  
18          individual fails to serve as a nurse educator at a nursing school in this State for  
19          a period that would entitle the individual to the full scholarship benefit  
20          received by the individual, other than for good cause as determined by the  
21          Corporation, then the individual shall reimburse the Corporation a pro rata

1 portion of the scholarship paid under the Program pursuant to the terms of the  
2 interest-free reimbursement promissory note signed by the individual at the  
3 time of entering the Program.

4 (2) Loan repayment. An eligible individual shall be entitled to an  
5 amount of loan cancellation and repayment under this section equal to one year  
6 of loans for every for one year of service as a nurse educator at a nursing  
7 school in this State.

8 (g) Adoption of policies, procedures, and guidelines. The Corporation  
9 shall adopt policies, procedures, and guidelines necessary to implement the  
10 provisions of this section.

11 Sec. K. NURSE EDUCATOR SCHOLARSHIP AND LOAN REPAYMENT  
12 PROGRAM;

13 APPROPRIATION

14 The sum of \$500,000.00 is appropriated from the General Fund to the  
15 Department of Health in fiscal year 2023 for scholarships and loan repayment  
16 for nurse educators under the Nurse Educator Scholarship and Loan  
17 Repayment Program established in Sec. J of this act.

18 Sec. L. NURSING SCHOOLS; SIMULATION LAB UPDATE AND  
19 EXPANSION;

20 APPROPRIATION



1 subsection 9352(i) of this title, provided that the Board shall not require a  
2 hospital to create a level of connectivity that the State's Exchange is unable to  
3 support;

4 (12) review the hospital's investments in workforce development  
5 initiatives, including nursing workforce pipeline collaborations with nursing  
6 schools and compensation and other support for nurse preceptors; and

7 (13) consider the salaries for the hospital's executive and clinical  
8 leadership and the hospital's salary spread, including a comparison of median  
9 salaries to the medians of northern New England states.

10 \* \* \*

11 Sec. N. GREEN MOUNTAIN CARE BOARD; FISCAL YEAR 2023

12 HOSPITAL BUDGET

13 REVIEW; NURSING WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

14 INITIATIVES

15 For hospital fiscal year 2023, the Green Mountain Care Board may exclude  
16 all or a portion of a hospital's investments in nursing workforce development  
17 initiatives from any otherwise applicable financial limitations on the hospital's  
18 budget or budget growth. Notwithstanding any provision of GMCB Rule  
19 3.202, the Board may modify its hospital budget guidance for hospital fiscal  
20 year 2023 as needed to comply with this section.

1 Sec. O. DESIGNATED AND SPECIALIZED SERVICE AGENCIES;  
2 MEDICAID  
3 RATE INCREASE; REPORT

4 (a) Since the 1960s, the State and federal governments have directed the  
5 community mental health system to provide care in the community using the  
6 least restrictive means for those who would previously have been  
7 institutionalized, but never redistributed the money to the community mental  
8 health system or fully funded that mandate. The General Assembly is taking  
9 the steps set forth in subsections (b) and (c) of this section to address the  
10 shortfall.

11 (b) The sum of \$41,854,493.00 in Global Commitment dollars is  
12 appropriated to the Agency of Human Services in fiscal year 2023 to increase  
13 the Medicaid rates for the mental health and developmental disability services  
14 provided by designated and specialized service agencies by 10 percent.

15 (c) The Departments of Mental Health and of Disabilities, Aging, and  
16 Independent Living, in consultation with representatives of the designated and  
17 specialized services agencies, shall report to the House Committees on Health  
18 Care, on Human Services, and on Appropriations and the Senate Committees  
19 on Health and Welfare and on Appropriations on or before January 15, 2023  
20 with the total amount of funds that would be necessary on an annual basis to  
21 increase the salaries for all staff in the community mental health system to the



1 level of equivalent positions in the State workforce, Vermont hospitals, and  
2 school settings.

3 Sec. P. AGENCY OF HUMAN SERVICES; DESIGNATED AND  
4 SPECIALIZED

5 SERVICE AGENCIES; WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

6 (a) The sum of \$6,000,000.00 is appropriated to the Agency of Human  
7 Services from the General Fund in fiscal year 2023 to expand the supply of  
8 high-quality mental health, substance use disorder treatment, and  
9 developmental disability services professionals by distributing funds to the  
10 designated and specialized service agencies equitably based on each agency's  
11 proportion of full-time- equivalent (FTE) mental health, substance use disorder  
12 treatment, and developmental disability services staff to the total number of  
13 FTE mental health, substance use disorder treatment, and developmental  
14 disability services staff across all designated and specialized service agencies  
15 statewide. The designated and specialized service agencies shall use these  
16 funds for loan repayment and tuition assistance to promote the recruitment and  
17 retention of high-quality mental health, substance use disorder treatment, and  
18 developmental disability services professionals available to Vermont residents  
19 in need of their services, as set forth in subsection (b) of this section.

20 (b)(1) Each designated and specialized service agency shall make the funds  
21 received pursuant to subsection (a) of this section available to its current and

1 prospective employees as set forth in subdivisions (A) and (B) of this  
2 subdivision (1) on a rolling basis in exchange for a one-year service obligation  
3 to provide mental health, substance use disorder treatment, or developmental  
4 disability services, or a combination of these, at a designated or specialized  
5 service agency in this State. The funds may be used for the following  
6 purposes:

7 (A) loan repayment for master’s-level clinicians, bachelor’s-level  
8 direct service staff, and nurses; and

9 (B) tuition assistance for individuals pursuing degrees to become  
10 master’s-level clinicians, bachelor’s-level direct service staff, and nurses.

11 (2) Loan repayment and tuition assistance funds shall be available to the  
12 current and prospective employees of designated and specialized service  
13 agencies in the form of forgivable loans, with the debt forgiven upon the  
14 employee’s completion of the required service obligation.

15 (c) Until the funds have been fully expended, the Agency of Human  
16 Services shall report on or before January 15 annually to the House  
17 Committees on Appropriations, on Health Care, and on Human Services and  
18 the Senate Committees on Appropriations and on Health and Welfare with  
19 information on the following:

1           (1) the specific designated and specialized service agencies that have  
2           received funds to date and the programs within each of those agencies in which  
3           the financial assistance recipients will deliver services;

4           (2) the amount of financial assistance funding provided to each  
5           recipient;

6           (3) the specific degrees or certificates toward which the tuition  
7           assistance recipients are working and those earned by loan repayment  
8           recipients; and

9           (4) the number of new employees attracted to the designated and  
10          specialized service agencies as a result of the financial assistance, their fields  
11          of study, and the programs in which they deliver services.

12          Sec. Q. OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL REGULATION; BARRIERS TO  
13          MENTAL

14                   HEALTH LICENSURE; REPORT

15          The Office of Professional Regulation shall undertake a systematic review  
16          of the licensing processes for mental health and substance use disorder  
17          treatment professionals to identify barriers to licensure. On or before January  
18          15, 2023, the Office shall provide its findings and recommendations to address  
19          any identified barriers to licensure to the House Committees on Health Care,  
20          on Human Services, on Commerce and Economic Development, and on  
21          Government Operations and the Senate Committees on Health and Welfare, on

1 Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs, and on Government  
2 Operations.

3 Sec. R. AGENCY OF HUMAN SERVICES; POSITION; APPROPRIATION

4 (a) One classified, three-year limited-service Health Care Workforce  
5 Coordinator position is created in the Agency of Human Services, Office of  
6 Health Care Reform in fiscal year 2023 to support the health care workforce  
7 initiatives set forth in this act and in the Health Care Workforce Development  
8 Strategic Plan. The Coordinator shall focus on building educational, clinical,  
9 and housing partnerships and support structures to increase and improve health  
10 care workforce training, recruitment, and retention.

11 (b) The sum of \$170,000.00 is appropriated from the General Fund to the  
12 Agency of Human Services, Office of Health Care Reform in fiscal year 2023  
13 for the Health Care Workforce Coordinator position, of which \$120,000.00 is  
14 for personal services and \$50,000.00 is for operating expenses.

15 Sec. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR; HEALTH CARE WORKFORCE

16 DATA

17 HUB; HEALTH RESOURCE ALLOCATION PLAN

18 The sum of \$2,500,000.00 is appropriated to the Department of Labor from  
19 the General Fund in fiscal year 2023 to enable the Department to serve as the  
20 State's health care workforce data hub. The Department shall collect health  
21 care workforce data and identify and propose solutions to address data gaps,

1 and shall share the data with the Green Mountain Care Board to inform the  
2 Board's work in identifying the State's health resources available to meet  
3 Vermonters' health care needs and additional resources that may be necessary,  
4 as part of the Board's Health Resource Allocation Plan responsibilities  
5 pursuant to 18 V.S.A. § 9405. The Department shall use existing statewide  
6 information to the extent practicable to avoid imposing administrative burdens  
7 on health care providers and to avoid duplication of efforts underway  
8 elsewhere in Vermont. The Department shall expand its data collection  
9 practices over two years to include all levels of the health care workforce,  
10 beginning with the highest-level licensed health care professionals.

11 Sec. T. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR; GREEN MOUNTAIN CARE BOARD;

12 SUPPLY

13 AND DEMAND MODELING

14 On or before January 15, 2023, the Department of Labor, in collaboration  
15 with the Green Mountain Care Board, shall explore and recommend to the  
16 House Committees on Health Care, on Human Services, and on Commerce and  
17 Economic Development and the Senate Committees on Health and Welfare  
18 and on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs a process,  
19 methodology, and necessary funding amounts to establish and maintain the  
20 capacity to perform health care supply and demand modeling based on

1 information in the health care workforce data hub, for use by health care  
2 employers, health care educators, and policymakers.

3 Sec. U. DEPARTMENT OF FINANCIAL REGULATION; GREEN  
4 MOUNTAIN

5 CARE BOARD; PRIOR AUTHORIZATIONS; ADMINISTRATIVE  
6 COST  
7 REDUCTION; REPORT

8 (a) The Department of Financial Regulation shall explore the feasibility of  
9 requiring health insurers and their prior authorization vendors to access clinical  
10 data from the Vermont Health Information Exchange whenever possible to  
11 support prior authorization requests in situations in which a request cannot be  
12 automatically approved.

13 (b) The Department of Financial Regulation shall direct health insurers to  
14 provide prior authorization information to the Department in a format required  
15 by the Department in order to enable the Department to analyze opportunities  
16 to align and streamline prior authorization request processes. The Department  
17 shall share its findings and recommendations with the Green Mountain Care  
18 Board, and the Department and the Board shall collaborate to provide  
19 recommendations to the House Committee on Health Care and the Senate  
20 Committees on Health and Welfare and on Finance on or before January 15.

1 2023 regarding the statutory changes necessary to align and streamline prior  
2 authorization processes and requirements across health insurers.

3

4

5 Sec. 15. EFFECTIVE DATE

6 This act shall take effect on July 1, 2022.

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

14

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\_\_\_\_\_

Representative \_\_\_\_\_

FOR THE COMMITTEE