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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

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RELATING TO HEALTH CARE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:**

1           SECTION 1. The legislature finds that although current  
2 efforts to address the health care workforce shortage have been  
3 successful, it has also become clear that the needs of the  
4 rapidly aging population in Hawaii are contributing to increased  
5 demand for workers throughout the health care field. The 2024  
6 *Healthcare Workforce Initiative* survey from the Healthcare  
7 Association of Hawaii found that there are nearly four thousand  
8 seven hundred openings for non-physician, patient-facing  
9 positions in hospitals, nursing homes, clinics, and other health  
10 care facilities in the State.

11           The legislature recognizes the urgent need to address  
12 Hawaii's health care workforce shortages due to increasing  
13 demand for health care services across the State. The Hawaii  
14 Healthcare Workforce Initiative has played a crucial role in  
15 mitigating this issue through various workforce development  
16 programs. Two key program types offered by the Healthcare  
17 Association of Hawaii are the public high school health care



1 certificate programs and the certified nurse assistant (CNA) to  
2 licensed practical nurse (LPN) glidepath program. Both programs  
3 aim to strengthen Hawaii's health care system by preparing new  
4 health care workers to enter the workforce and supporting the  
5 career advancement of existing workers.

6 The public high school health care certificate programs are  
7 designed to provide students with the training and skills  
8 necessary to enter health care positions immediately after  
9 graduation. These programs address the significant shortage of  
10 entry-level health care workers in Hawaii and offer students a  
11 pathway to careers that pay a living wage and provide  
12 opportunities for further professional development. By covering  
13 the costs of tuition, transportation, and work uniforms, and  
14 offering career coaching and counseling, the programs help to  
15 remove barriers to entry into the health care workforce. It is  
16 estimated that these programs can assist approximately one  
17 hundred and fifty students per year, with an average cost of  
18 \$4,300 per student.

19 The CNA+ to LPN glidepath program offers a critical career  
20 advancement opportunity for CNAs already working in health care.  
21 This program follows an "earn-and-learn" model, allowing CNAs to



1 continue working full-time while pursuing licensure as LPNs.  
2 The glidepath program provides essential services such as  
3 tuition assistance, transportation, food stipends, counseling,  
4 and career advice. The legislature recognizes that LPNs are in  
5 particularly high demand in nursing homes, assisted living  
6 facilities, and other long-term care settings, making this  
7 program an important tool for retaining and advancing health  
8 care workers in these essential roles. Healthcare Association  
9 of Hawaii's glidepath program supports approximately forty  
10 participants per year.

11 The legislature further finds that health care employers  
12 have invested heavily in these programs. Employers have  
13 provided clinicians to teach some of the courses and invested in  
14 hands-on training opportunities for students to enable them to  
15 learn in a real-life setting. Employers have also often awarded  
16 stipends to students, especially in the glidepath program, to  
17 ensure participants are compensated as if working full-time.  
18 Other entities have also provided significant staffing resources  
19 to recruit students, coordinate programs, and raise federal,  
20 state, and private funds to maintain these vital programs.



1       The legislature acknowledges that both of these programs  
2   are crucial in addressing Hawaii's health care workforce needs.  
3   A 2022 survey by the Healthcare Workforce Initiative found that  
4   more than 1,500 existing health care job openings could be  
5   filled by graduates of the high school certificate programs or  
6   CNAs who advance to LPNs through a glidepath program. Despite  
7   their current success, these programs must be continuously  
8   supported and scaled up to meet the ever-increasing health care  
9   needs of Hawaii's people.

10       Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to appropriate  
11   funds to support educational programs that expand the State's  
12   health care workforce.

13       SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general  
14   revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$                    or so  
15   much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 and  
16   the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal  
17   year 2026-2027 for educational programs to expand the State's  
18   health care workforce to be allocated as follows:

19       (1) \$                   to support health care certification  
20       programs offered in public high schools; and



1           (2)   \$                   for education programs that support  
2                   certified nurse aides in obtaining licensure as  
3                   licensed practical nurses.

4           The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department  
5 of business, economic development, and tourism for the purposes  
6 of this Act.

7           SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on December 31,  
8 2050.



**Report Title:**

DBEDT; Education; Health Care Workforce; Appropriations

**Description:**

Appropriates funds to support educational training programs to expand the State's health care workforce, including funding to support health care certification programs offered in public high schools and education programs that support certified nurse assistants in becoming licensed practical nurses. Effective 12/31/2050. (SD1)

*The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.*

