THE SENATE
THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE, 2025
STATE OF HAWAII

S.B. NO. 294

JAN 15 2025

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO HEALTH CARE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of $1,450,000 or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 and the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2026-2027 for educational programs to expand the State's health care workforce to be allocated as follows:

(1) $ to be expended by the department of education to:

(A) Support health care certification programs offered in public high schools; and

(B) Renovate and equip public high school classrooms to make them more suitable for health care training; and

(2) $ to be expended by the university of Hawaii for education programs that support certified nurse aides in obtaining licensure as licensed practical nurses.

SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

INTRODUCED BY: _____

S.B. NO. 294

Report Title:
DOE; UH; Education; Health Care Workforce; Appropriations

Description:
Appropriates funds to support educational training programs to expand the State's health care workforce. Allocates funds to the Department of Education for health care certificate programs and classroom renovations for health care training in public high schools. Allocates funds to the University of Hawaii for education programs that support certified nurse assistants in becoming licensed practical nurses.

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