

Healthcare and Nursing Apprenticeships
Statewide Registered Apprenticeship Initiative to Address the Nursing Shortage in Texas
Discussion Paper

On January 27, 2022, Commissioner Julian Alvarez, Commissioner Representing Labor, convened a meeting with industry partners, apprenticeship staff, and workforce development staff, at the request of Baylor Scott and White and Doctor's Hospital Renaissance to discuss their staffing needs. This discussion paper reflects the discussion held at that meeting and is being brought forward as requested by Commissioner Alvarez at the February 1, 2022, Commission meeting.

Background

Over the past 10 years, Registered Nurses have been a top job posting in Texas.

In 2001, the 77th Texas Legislature passed Senate Bill 572, Nursing Shortage Act, which established a program to increase both student enrollment in nursing education programs and the number of nursing school faculty. Subsequent rider language has provided funding to institutions of higher education towards this effort. For this biennium, the legislature appropriated approximately \$18M to continue to address these shortages.

In October 2020, a Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) work group study indicated that Pre-Registered Nurse (RN) licensure student admissions:

- increased from 10,856 in academic year 2008-2009 to 16,284 in academic year 2017-2018 (a 50 percent increase); and
- during that the same time, qualified applicants not admitted to RN programs increased from 8,957 to 12,916 (a 44.2 percent increase).

In 2020, the Texas Center for Nursing Workforce Studies predicted that Texas will have a deficit of 57,012 RNs in 2032.

Given the shortages the state is experiencing now, the shortages expected for the future, and the clear need to move more students into RN programs, it is an opportune time to find innovative approaches for meeting this critical need.

Proposed Initiative

One such approach is the development of a statewide initiative for the healthcare industry to increase the number of career pathway opportunities through registered apprenticeship to ultimately increase the number of RNs in the state. This Statewide Healthcare Registered Apprenticeship Initiative will be designed to:

1. offer employers an innovative approach to hiring and training future nurses and healthcare staff, and
2. expand opportunities for students who wish to pursue career pathways to RN and other healthcare fields.

The statewide initiative will be a collaborative effort in which TWC staff will work together to ensure:

- an expedited application process,
- coordination across multiple workforce areas, and
- streamlined management of multiple funding streams.

While some elements of the statewide initiative will be developed in response to stakeholder feedback, the following may be considered as foundational items:

- providing paid RN clinicals;
- convening workshops that include subject matter experts representing healthcare providers, higher education, and workforce to explore ways to support pathway credentialing for:
 - Certified Nurse Assistant,
 - Licensed Vocational Nurse,
 - Associate Degree in Nursing to Registered Nurse, and
 - Registered Nurse to Bachelor of Science in Nursing;
- identifying, mapping, and incorporating credentials—relevant and of value to the healthcare industry—that are stackable and portable (for example, phlebotomy); and
- developing articulated crosswalks, thereby enabling students who have completed registered apprenticeship programs to earn college credit.

Decision Point

Staff presents for consideration and discussion the concepts above as discussed. In addition, it is proposed that the following funds and amounts be used for the Statewide Healthcare Registered Apprenticeship Initiative:

- \$10M WIOA Statewide
- \$5M DOL Apprenticeship Expansion (up to \$2,000 per apprentice, based on funding availability)