

---

## OLR Bill Analysis

**sSB 1450 (File 611, as amended by Senate "A")\***

### ***AN ACT CONCERNING RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF THE HEALTH CARE WORKFORCE.***

#### **SUMMARY**

This bill requires the Department of Public Health (DPH) to create, within available appropriations, a loan reimbursement program for health care providers, with some of the awards targeted to primary care providers and those employed in rural communities or at federally qualified health centers (FQHCs).

The bill requires DPH, in collaboration with a Connecticut-based educational or educational technology provider, to create a pilot program providing home-based virtual education to people seeking certification as a nurse's aide or emergency medical technician (EMT). The bill specifies that it does not eliminate existing requirements for these people to receive in-person practical training.

It requires the education commissioner to add radiologic technology, nuclear medicine technology, and respiratory care to an existing plan on promoting health care career options to middle and high school students.

Lastly, the bill requires DPH, within available appropriations, to create a program giving grants to recruit athletic trainers from other states to move to Connecticut to work in rural or underserved areas. The grants are for their relocation costs.

\*Senate Amendment "A" (1) specifies that the loan reimbursement program does not apply to self-employed providers or sole proprietors; (2) requires DPH to collaborate with a state-based educational or educational technology provider, not necessarily a nonprofit organization, in creating the virtual education pilot program; and (3) removes a provision from the underlying bill that would have

prohibited state-administered loan reimbursement programs for certain providers from requiring, under their eligibility criteria, that the provider be employed by a nonprofit employer.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage, except the provisions on the DPH loan reimbursement program and athletic trainer grant program take effect July 1, 2025.

## **§ 1 — STUDENT LOAN REIMBURSEMENT GRANT PROGRAM**

The bill requires DPH, within available appropriations, to create a program giving loan reimbursement grants to health care providers. The program is open to DPH-licensed providers employed full time in the state, and DPH must give awards annually, to reimburse recipients for qualifying student loan payments. But the program is not open to self-employed providers or sole proprietors of a professional health care practice.

Under the bill, the DPH commissioner must set the (1) award amounts; (2) program's eligibility requirements, which may include income guidelines; and (3) application process. She must consider workforce shortage areas when developing the eligibility requirements.

DPH must award at least (1) 20% of grants to full-time primary care providers and (2) 20% of grants to providers employed full-time in rural communities or at FQHCs. For this purpose, primary care includes family medicine, general pediatrics, primary care, internal medicine, and primary care obstetrics or gynecology, regardless of board certification.

The bill allows DPH to adopt regulations implementing the program.

## **§ 2 — VIRTUAL EDUCATION PILOT PROGRAM**

The bill requires DPH to create a pilot program providing home-based virtual education for people seeking to become a nurse's aide or EMT. DPH must do so by January 1, 2026, and in collaboration with a Connecticut-based educational provider or educational technology provider.

Under the bill, the program must offer courses that meet DPH's training and competency evaluation requirements for nurse's aide registration and EMT certification. The bill requires the commissioner to set the program's eligibility criteria and allows her to solicit and accept private funds to implement the program. By January 1, 2027, she must report to the Public Health Committee on the program's outcome.

The bill specifies that it does not eliminate specified existing requirements for nurse's aides and EMTs to receive in-person, supervised practical training. This includes requirements under (1) federal regulations on state approval of nurse's aide training programs, (2) state regulations on nursing homes employing nurse's aides, and (3) state law on EMT certification.

### **§ 3 — HEALTH CARE CAREER PROMOTION**

Existing law requires the state's chief workforce officer, in consultation with various stakeholders, to develop a plan to work with high schools in the state to encourage students to pursue high-demand health care professions. The education commissioner, in collaboration with the chief workforce officer, must use this plan in (1) promoting health care professions as career options to middle and high school students and (2) health care job shadowing and internship experiences for high school students.

The bill requires the education commissioner, by January 1, 2026, to amend the plan to specifically include promoting the professions of radiologic technology, nuclear medicine technology, and respiratory care through related (1) career day presentations; (2) partnerships with in-state education programs; (3) counseling programs to inform high school students about, and recruit them for, these professions; and (4) job shadowing and internship experiences for high school students.

### **§ 4 — ATHLETIC TRAINER RELOCATION GRANT PROGRAM**

The bill requires DPH, by January 1, 2026, and within available appropriations, to create a program giving relocation assistance grants to athletic trainers who relocate to Connecticut, get licensed here, and work in rural or underserved areas. The commissioner must determine

the grant amounts and set the application and eligibility criteria and related forms. She also must require grant recipients to report to her on how they used the funds.

Starting by January 1, 2027, the bill requires the commissioner to annually report to the Public Health Committee on the program's impact in recruiting athletic trainers to work in the state's rural and underserved areas.

## **BACKGROUND**

### ***Related Bill***

sHB 6979, § 5, favorably reported by the Public Health and Finance, Revenue and Bonding committees, requires DPH, within available appropriations, to establish a student loan repayment program for primary care and behavioral health services providers.

## **COMMITTEE ACTION**

### Public Health Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea    29    Nay   3    (03/21/2025)

### Appropriations Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea    43    Nay   4    (05/12/2025)