



Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL

Legislation Text

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PROPOSED RESOLUTION

PROPOSED RESOLUTION ON STRENGTHENING AND SUSTAINING THE HEALTHCARE WORKFORCE IN THE UNITED STATES

WHEREAS, Nationwide, the healthcare system faces a shortage of healthcare workers, including nurses and specialized doctors, which may jeopardize access to high quality, equitable care for patients and communities;

WHEREAS, according to the American Hospital Association, the United States boasts over 6,000 hospitals, including rural, urban, and local and state government community hospitals, servicing over 900,000 beds throughout the country;

WHEREAS, hospitals, clinics, and medical centers face job vacancies for various types of personnel, including nurses and respiratory therapists;

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic left a profound toll on the mental and physical well-being of healthcare workers, with many suffering from burnout, stress, and mental health challenges;

WHEREAS, the number of nurses entering retirement coupled with the Great Resignation - where over 47 million Americans voluntarily quit their jobs - have led to unprecedented employee exits in the medical field;

WHEREAS, to address the shortages of medical professionals, many health systems have resorted to the use of staffing agencies to fill vacancies;

WHEREAS, staffing agencies are very costly for counties to maintain in the long term and difficult to manage while trying to fill permanent positions;

WHEREAS, permanent employees report difficulties with having to onboard and train temporary employees and little opportunity to build workplace morale;

WHEREAS, health systems throughout the nation need to employ permanent solutions to expand our healthcare workforce system, including an investment in employees from communities where healthcare access is not readily accessible, thereby increasing diversity and trust in the field.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Cook County Board of Commissioners calls on the federal government to work collaboratively with local and state governments to create a pipeline of healthcare workers to address the national shortage by:

- (1) funding programs aimed at creating opportunities for high school and post-secondary students to explore career opportunities in the medical field;
- (2) designating scholarships and grants for students enrolled in degrees and licenses related to the medical field, including dentistry and mental and behavioral health;
- (3) outreaching to communities of color to encourage multi-lingual and diverse candidates from communities who typically do not have access to health care; and

- (4) identifying public funded medical systems throughout the nation, such as Cook County Health, to create a pipeline of healthcare workers with the goal of expanding and strengthening the health care workforce system.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a suitable copy of this resolution be sent to the Office of the President of the United States, Office of the Vice-President of the United States, the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of the US Department of Health and Human Services, and the Illinois delegation in the US House of Representative and the US Senate.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, a similar resolution was presented and approved at the National Association of Counties 2024 Legislative Conference, before the Health Steering Committee on February 10, 2024, in Washington, DC.