

117TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# S. 4844

To amend the Public Health Service Act to support and stabilize the existing nursing workforce, establish programs to increase the number of nurses, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

SEPTEMBER 14, 2022

Mr. MERKLEY (for himself and Mr. TILLIS) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

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## A BILL

To amend the Public Health Service Act to support and stabilize the existing nursing workforce, establish programs to increase the number of nurses, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “National Nursing  
5 Workforce Center Act of 2022”.

6 **SEC. 2. STATE NURSING WORKFORCE CENTERS.**

7 Title VII of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C.  
8 292 et seq.) is amended—

1           (1) by redesignating part G (42 U.S.C. 295j et  
2           seq.) as part H; and

3           (2) by inserting after part F the following new  
4           part:

5           **“PART G—NURSING WORKFORCE CENTERS**

6           **“SEC. 785. STATE AND REGIONAL NURSING WORKFORCE**

7                           **CENTER DATA COLLECTION PILOT PRO-**

8                           **GRAM.**

9           “(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall carry out a  
10          3-year pilot program to establish new or enhance existing  
11          State-based nursing workforce centers, evaluate the im-  
12          pact of State-based nursing workforce centers on out-  
13          comes, and assess the feasibility of nursing workforce pub-  
14          lic-private partnerships. The Secretary shall begin imple-  
15          mentation of such pilot program not later than 1 year  
16          after the date of enactment of the National Nursing Work-  
17          force Center Act of 2022.

18          “(b) GRANT TERMS.—

19                  “(1) NUMBER OF GRANTS AWARDED.—The  
20          Secretary shall award not fewer than 6 grants under  
21          the pilot program under subsection (a).

22                  “(2) TERM.—The term of a grant awarded  
23          under the pilot program under subsection (a) shall  
24          be 3 years.

1           “(3) MATCHING REQUIREMENT.—As a condi-  
2           tion on receipt of a grant under the pilot program  
3           under subsection (a), the Secretary shall require the  
4           applicant to agree, with respect to costs to be in-  
5           curred by the applicant in carrying out the activities  
6           funded through the grant, to make available non-  
7           Federal contributions (in cash or in kind) toward  
8           such costs in an amount that is equal to not less  
9           than \$1 for each \$4 of Federal funds provided  
10          through the grant. Such contributions may be made  
11          directly or through donations from public or private  
12          entities.

13          “(c) ELIGIBILITY.—To be eligible to receive a grant  
14          under this section, an entity shall be—

15                 “(1) a State agency;

16                 “(2) a State board of nursing;

17                 “(3) an organization that is exempt from tax-  
18                 ation under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Rev-  
19                 enue Act of 1986;

20                 “(4) a community-based organization;

21                 “(5) a school of nursing (as defined in section  
22                 801); or

23                 “(6) a school or program determined by the  
24                 Secretary to be an eligible entity for purposes of this  
25                 section.

1       “(d) **EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION.**—In awarding  
2 grants under this section, the Secretary shall ensure, to  
3 the greatest extent possible, that such grants are equitably  
4 distributed among—

5           “(1) the geographical regions of the United  
6 States; and

7           “(2) States with an existing nursing workforce  
8 center and States without any such existing center.

9       “(e) **PRIORITY.**—In selecting the eligible entity to be  
10 awarded a grant under this section for a nursing work-  
11 force center in a particular State, the Secretary shall give  
12 priority to eligible entities that—

13           “(1) propose to provide statewide services;

14           “(2) have expertise in the State’s nursing work-  
15 force issues;

16           “(3) have a history of convening entities to ad-  
17 dress nursing workforce issues; and

18           “(4) have partnerships with entities that tradi-  
19 tionally educate and employ the State’s nurses.

20       “(f) **USE OF FUNDS.**—A nursing workforce center  
21 supported under this section may use funds provided  
22 under this section for the following statewide activities:

23           “(1) Conducting comprehensive analysis of and  
24 research on—

1           “(A) existing State nursing workforce data  
2           and gaps in such data;

3           “(B) 2- and 4-year nursing education pro-  
4           grams, including with respect to—

5                   “(i) faculty capacity and pay;

6                   “(ii) enrollment, retention, and grad-  
7           uation;

8                   “(iii) services for nursing students  
9           and the outcomes of such services;

10                   “(iv) facility needs; and

11                   “(v) clinical placement capacity;

12           “(C) State-specific scholarships, grants,  
13           and financial aid; and

14           “(D) factors contributing to retention and  
15           recruitment challenges and to nurses leaving  
16           the workplace or profession.

17           “(2) Conducting strategic nursing workforce  
18           planning with employers across all work settings and  
19           nursing education.

20           “(3) Conducting focused research on trends in  
21           nursing shortages, including the fiscal and clinical  
22           outcomes of contract nursing.

23           “(4) Establishing and implementing programs  
24           to—

1           “(A) support and retain faculty to increase  
2 enrollment in schools of nursing;

3           “(B) recruit and retain nurses in all set-  
4 tings where nurses practice;

5           “(C) support leadership development;

6           “(D) prepare the nursing workforce to ad-  
7 dress social determinants of health and health  
8 inequities;

9           “(E) prepare nurses for public health crisis  
10 and pandemic response;

11           “(F) assist individuals in obtaining edu-  
12 cation and training required to enter the nurs-  
13 ing profession, and advance within such profes-  
14 sion, such as by providing career counseling and  
15 mentoring; and

16           “(G) diversify the nursing workforce.

17       “(g) REPORTS.—Not later than one year after the  
18 date on which the first grant is awarded under the pilot  
19 program under subsection (a), and annually thereafter,  
20 the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on the  
21 grants awarded under such pilot program during the year  
22 covered by the report. Each such report shall include—

23           “(1) a description of initiatives to study the  
24 unique characteristics of State nursing workforces,  
25 and efforts to increase the number of new nurses,

1 recruit nurses to the nursing profession, and retain  
2 nurses in the workplace;

3 “(2) impact data on nurses served by nursing  
4 workforce centers, including demographic informa-  
5 tion of the individuals served, the number of such in-  
6 dividuals, and the types of services provided;

7 “(3) the effectiveness of establishing formal  
8 public-private relationships at understanding the na-  
9 tional nursing workforce through improved data col-  
10 lection and standardization;

11 “(4) data on continuous evaluation and quality  
12 improvement, and other relevant data as determined  
13 by the Secretary; and

14 “(5) the Secretary’s recommendations and best  
15 practices for—

16 “(A) reducing shortages among different  
17 nursing specialties;

18 “(B) reducing shortages in rural and un-  
19 derserved areas;

20 “(C) improving geographical distribution of  
21 the nursing workforce; and

22 “(D) reducing shortages among different  
23 types of nursing employers.

24 “(h) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—To  
25 carry out this section, out of funds appropriated to the

1 general departmental management account of the Office  
 2 of the Secretary, there is authorized to be appropriated  
 3 \$1,500,000 for each of fiscal years 2023 through 2025.”.

4 **SEC. 3. STATE AND REGIONAL CENTERS FOR HEALTH**  
 5 **WORKFORCE ANALYSIS.**

6 (a) **EXPANSION OF COVERED PROGRAMS.**—Section  
 7 761(c)(1)(A) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C.  
 8 294n(c)(1)(A)) is amended by striking “under this title”  
 9 and inserting “under this Act”.

10 (b) **ANALYSIS AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.**—Sec-  
 11 tion 761(c) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C.  
 12 294n(c)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

13 “(3) **MINIMUM REQUIREMENT.**—At least one  
 14 grant or contract awarded under this subsection  
 15 shall be awarded to an eligible entity that dem-  
 16 onstrates—

17 “(A) a mission to advance and support the  
 18 nursing workforce;

19 “(B) experience and expertise in guiding  
 20 State-level nursing workforce centers;

21 “(C) experience in working with nursing  
 22 workforce data;

23 “(D) expertise in analytical methods and  
 24 tools appropriate for nursing workforce re-  
 25 search; and



1           “(E) awareness of emerging topics, issues,  
2           and trends related to the nursing workforce.

3           “(4) ANALYSIS AND REPORTING.—Analysis and  
4           reporting carried out pursuant to a grant or con-  
5           tract under this subsection may include—

6           “(A) collaborating with nursing workforce  
7           centers to produce or deliver, with respect to  
8           the supply of nurses, the demand for nurses,  
9           and the capacity to educate and train the nurs-  
10          ing workforce—

11                   “(i) regional and national reports;

12                   “(ii) articles in peer-reviewed journals;

13                   “(iii) presentations at national and  
14                   international conferences and meetings;  
15                   and

16                   “(iv) policy briefs, fact sheets, articles,  
17                   blogs, and other publications available in  
18                   the public domain;

19           “(B) evaluating the programs and activi-  
20           ties of the nursing workforce centers overall;

21           “(C) developing evidence-based or evi-  
22           dence-informed strategies and best practices to  
23           alleviate nursing workforce shortages across  
24           States and regions; and

1           “(D) conducting rapid data analysis and  
2           short-term, issue-specific research.

3           “(5) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—Technical as-  
4           sistance provided pursuant to this subsection may  
5           include—

6           “(A) providing technical assistance to  
7           nursing workforce centers on the collection,  
8           analysis, and reporting of standardized supply,  
9           demand, and education and training data to in-  
10          form analysis conducted pursuant to paragraph  
11          (1);

12          “(B) collaborating with nursing workforce  
13          centers to identify and deliver evidence-based or  
14          evidence-informed strategies to alleviate nursing  
15          shortages and the maldistribution of nurses;

16          “(C) providing online and in-person train-  
17          ing opportunities for nurses and other staff at  
18          nursing workforce centers; and

19          “(D) developing and maintaining a website  
20          that—

21                  “(i) is accessible to grant and contract  
22                  recipients under section 785 and this sec-  
23                  tion;

1                   “(ii) supports resources for the provi-  
2                   sion of technical assistance under this sec-  
3                   tion, such as—

4                   “(I) evidence-based or evidence-  
5                   informed educational materials, tools,  
6                   recent findings of interest, and links  
7                   to relevant resources; and

8                   “(II) logistical and administrative  
9                   information, such as online trainings,  
10                  webinars, and publications; and

11                  “(iii) includes a publicly accessible re-  
12                  pository of webinars, tools, and resources.

13                  “(6) DEFINITION.—In this subsection, the term  
14                  ‘nursing workforce center’ means a nursing work-  
15                  force center funded under section 785.”.

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