



Support for Health Care Workforce

ISSUE BRIEF | House Bill 22-1041 and Senate Bill 22-226

Background

The health care workforce in Colorado and around the country has been put under immense stress over the past two years, in part due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, a major focus for CHA and Colorado legislators during the 2022 legislative session was to invest in both short-term and long-term policies to support current health care workers as well as strengthen the health care workforce pipeline. This issue brief describes two of the more than 25 bills that CHA tracked related to supporting the health care workforce.

HB 22-1041: Privacy Protections for Protected Persons

HB 22-1041 expands existing privacy protections against doxing, which is when an individual's private or identifying information is published online, to include the many health care workers and additional civil service workers. During the pandemic, many of Colorado's health care workers were the target of aggression and intimidation for simply doing their job, exacerbating burnout and turnover at a time when the health care workforce is most critically needed.

What You Need to Know

As of March 24, 2022, it is unlawful to make available on the Internet the personal information of health care workers. The law defines a **health care worker** as an employee, contracted health care provider, or individual serving in a governance capacity of a health care facility licensed by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE).

Health care workers can now submit a written request to a state or local government official to remove records with personal information from the Internet if the records pose an imminent and serious threat to their safety. Additionally, the law protects these individuals by prohibiting someone else from putting their personal information on the Internet.

Additional Resources

- [HB 22-1041 final bill text](#)
- [HB 22-1041 fiscal note](#)

SB 22-226: Programs to Support Health Care Workforce

The bill invests \$61 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds in supports for the health care workforce, the state's largest investment in today's health care heroes and the future health care workforce. The bill's programs focus on the wellbeing, education, training, recruitment, and retention of health care workers. The appropriated funds must be spent by June 30, 2025. Additionally, the bill requires CDPHE to create a statewide data sharing system to better allocate resources and inform decision makers of health care workforce planning initiatives, as well as expands the scope of the recommendations required by the Nurse-Physician Advisory Task Force for Colorado Healthcare (NPATCH). Finally, the bill repeals the mandate requiring a uniform credentialing application per the recommendation of the Health Care Credentials Application Review Committee, which determined that the requirement was a deterrent for efficient credentialing.

What You Need to Know

Health Care Workforce Resilience and Retention Program

The bill appropriates **\$2 million** to create the Health Care Workforce Resilience and Retention Program within CDPHE to support the resilience, wellbeing, and retention of health care workers through activities such as:

- Providing technical assistance, guidance, and funding support to community partners to develop programs and services aimed at retaining health care workers, such as best practices and strategies:
 - That promote healthy workplace cultures;
 - That promote the adoption of internal employee assistance programs;
 - That promote external third-party support and resilience programs; and,
 - For greater partnerships between care providers and facility and system executive leadership.
- Collaborative partnerships with community partners, such as the development, implementation, and evaluation of:
 - Peer support programs and services;
 - Pre-clinical in-person and telehealth services;
 - Training programs; and,
 - Recovery and resilience coaching for staff and leadership.
- Planning, research, and evaluation that supports the resilience, wellbeing, and retention of health care workers.

Practice-Based Health Education Grant Program

The bill appropriates **\$20 million** to create the Practice-based Health Education Grant Program within the Primary Care Office in CDPHE to increase clinical, practice-based training opportunities for students enrolled in a health care profession degree or licensure program through grants to organizations, public or nonprofit Colorado medical schools, or Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)-accredited residency programs. The Primary Care Office will conduct a stakeholder engagement process for recommendations on developing the program, such as grant program eligibility criteria.

School Nurse Grant Program

The bill appropriates **\$3 million** to CDPHE for the existing School Nurse Grant Program, which appropriates funding to local education providers to increase the number of school nurses in Colorado public schools. Additionally, the bill removes current limits on the amount of grants and the length of grant awards made from the program.

Reengagement Initiative

The bill appropriates **\$10 million** to CDPHE for recruitment and re-engagement of health care workers with current or expired licenses and staffing.

SB 22-226: Programs to Support Health Care Workforce – *continued*

What You Need to Know

In-Demand Short-Term Health Care Credentials Program

The bill appropriates **\$26 million** to the Colorado Community College System (CCCS) to create the In-Demand Short-Term Health Care Credentials Program to support the expansion and availability of in-demand health care professionals. Through the program, CCCS will allocate money to community colleges, area technical colleges, district colleges, and community nonprofits that deliver hybrid programming and student financial support in partnership with accredited universities.

Grantees can use the awarded funds to:

- Provide assistance for tuition, fees, and course materials for eligible programs;
- Support alignment with existing efforts for students to earn eligible program credentials that lead into health care careers such as nursing; and,
- Expand eligible programs in allied health based on in-demand credential needs or include high school equivalency support and attainment for students without a high school degree participating in the program.

CHA will provide additional information on rulemaking to implement these programs as they occur.

Additional Resources

- [SB 22-226 final bill text](#)
- [SB 22-226 fiscal note](#)