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**HOUSE BILL NO. 1903**

Offered January 13, 2025

Prefiled January 6, 2025

*A BILL to amend and reenact §§ 2.2-2040.1 and 32.1-122.7 of the Code of Virginia and to amend the Code of Virginia by adding a section numbered 32.1-122.7:3, relating to Virginia Health Workforce Development Authority; Virginia Nursing Workforce Center established; reporting and monitoring of health care workforce programs; residency slots; work group; report.*

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Patrons—Willett, Clark and Cole

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Referred to Committee on Health and Human Services

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**Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**

**1. That §§ 2.2-2040.1 and 32.1-122.7 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted and that the Code of Virginia is amended by adding a section numbered 32.1-122.7:3 as follows:**

**§ 2.2-2040.1. Virginia Health Workforce Innovation Fund.**

There is hereby created in the state treasury a special nonreverting fund to be known as the Virginia Health ~~Care Career and Technical Training and Education~~ *Workforce Innovation* Fund, referred to in this section as "the Fund." The Fund shall be established on the books of the Comptroller. All funds appropriated for such purpose and any gifts, donations, grants, bequests, and other funds received on its behalf shall be paid into the state treasury and credited to the Fund. Interest earned on moneys in the Fund shall remain in the Fund and be credited to it. Any moneys remaining in the Fund, including interest thereon, at the end of each fiscal year shall not revert to the general fund but shall remain in the Fund. The Fund shall be administered by the Director of the Department of Workforce Development and Advancement. Moneys in the Fund shall be used solely for the purposes of supporting the mission of the Virginia Health Workforce Development Authority, as described in § 32.1-122.7. Expenditures and disbursements from the Fund shall be made by the State Treasurer on warrants issued by the Comptroller upon written request signed by the Director of the Department of Workforce Development and Advancement.

**§ 32.1-122.7. Virginia Health Workforce Development Authority; purpose.**

A. There is hereby created as a public body corporate and as a political subdivision of the Commonwealth the Virginia Health Workforce Development Authority (the Authority), with such public and corporate powers as are set forth in § 32.1-122.7:2. The Authority is hereby constituted as a public instrumentality, exercising public and essential governmental functions with the power and purpose to provide for the health, welfare, convenience, knowledge, benefit, and prosperity of the residents of the Commonwealth and such other persons who might be served by the Authority. The Authority is established to move the Commonwealth forward in achieving its vision of ensuring a quality health workforce for all Virginians.

B. The mission of the Authority is to facilitate the development of a statewide health professions pipeline that identifies, educates, recruits, and retains a diverse, appropriately geographically distributed, and culturally competent quality workforce. The mission of the Authority is accomplished by (i) providing the statewide infrastructure required for health workforce needs assessment and planning that maintains engagement by health professions training programs in decision making and program implementation; (ii) serving as the advisory board and setting priorities for the Virginia Area Health Education Centers Program; (iii) coordinating with and serving as a resource to relevant state, regional, and local entities, including the Department of Health Professions Workforce Data Center, the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission, the Joint Commission on Health Care, the Behavioral Health Commission, the Southwest Virginia Health Authority, or any similar regional health authority that may be developed; (iv) informing state and local policy development as it pertains to health care delivery, training, and education; (v) identifying and promoting evidence-based strategies for health workforce pipeline development and interdisciplinary health care service models, particularly those affecting rural and other underserved areas; (vi) supporting communities in their health workforce recruitment and retention efforts and developing partnerships and promoting models of participatory engagement with business and community-based and social organizations to foster integration of health care training and education; (vii) setting priorities for and evaluating graduate medical education programs overseen by the Commonwealth; (viii) advocating for programs that will result in reducing the debt load of newly trained health professionals; (ix) setting priorities for and managing the Virginia Health ~~Care Career and Technical Training and Education~~ *Workforce Innovation* Fund; (x) identifying high priority target areas within each region of the Commonwealth and working toward health workforce development initiatives that improve health measurably in those areas; (xi) fostering or creating innovative health workforce development models that provide both health and economic benefits to the regions they serve; (xii) developing strategies to increase diversity in the health workforce by

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examining demographic data on race and ethnicity in training programs and health professional licensure; (xiii) identifying ways to leverage technology to increase access to health workforce training and health care delivery; and (xiv) developing a centralized health care careers roadmap in partnership with the Department of Health Professions that includes information on both licensed and unlicensed professions and that is disseminated to the Commonwealth's health care workforce stakeholders to raise awareness about available career pathways.

**§ 32.1-122.7:3. Virginia Nursing Workforce Center; purpose.**

A. There is hereby created as a public body corporate and as a political subdivision of the Commonwealth, the Virginia Nursing Workforce Center (the Center), under the auspices of the Virginia Health Workforce Development Authority (the Authority), with such public and corporate powers as are set forth in § 32.1-122.7:2. The Center is hereby constituted as a public instrumentality, exercising public and essential governmental functions with the power and purpose to provide for the health, welfare, convenience, knowledge, benefit, and prosperity of the residents of the Commonwealth and such other persons who might be served by the Authority. The Authority is established to move the Commonwealth forward in achieving its vision of ensuring a quality nursing workforce for all Virginians.

B. The mission of the Center shall be to ensure there is an adequate qualified nursing workforce to meet the current and future health care needs of Virginians by increasing the supply of nurses and resolving the critical nursing shortage. The mission of the Center shall be accomplished by (i) data collection and analysis, (ii) publication of reports and information, and (iii) implementation of strategic planning for policy changes necessary to address educational capacity and workforce supply, which shall involve the collection of data that allows the identification of imbalances between supply and demand and allows for forecasting efforts that drive nursing workforce development and policy recommendations. The Center shall develop a statewide plan for nursing that addresses issues of educational capacity and nursing workforce needs, maintains a database on nursing workforce needs, and convenes with professionals in and related to the nursing industry for strategies to implement the statewide plan. The Center may administer nursing workforce programs, including scholarship, loan repayment, and incentive programs. The Center shall coordinate with relevant persons involved in the nursing profession, including the Board of Nursing, professional nursing organizations, nurses teaching or participating in academic or training programs, nurses on staff at health care providers, and nurse executives.

C. The Authority shall appoint an advisory board of members with experience in the practice of nursing, the education of nurses, and the regulation and governance of nursing.

D. The Center shall:

1. Obtain and analyze data on the nursing workforce. Such data shall include education level, race, ethnicity, employment settings, nursing positions, work environment, salaries, former nurses' reasons for leaving the nursing profession, and number of nurses leaving Virginia to practice elsewhere. This data collection and analysis shall complement other data collection on the nursing workforce conducted by the Commonwealth, and the Center shall work collaboratively with other entities to ensure coordination and avoid duplication of efforts;

2. Monitor and validate trends in the applicant pool for programs in nursing. The Center shall work with nursing leaders to develop a strategic workforce development plan. Such plan shall identify approaches to addressing potential issues related to the trends identified and collect information on other states' approaches to addressing these issues;

3. Facilitate partnerships between the nursing community and other health care providers, licensing authorities, businesses, consumers, policymakers, and educators to achieve policy consensus, promote diversity within the profession, and enhance nursing career mobility and nursing leadership development;

4. Advise nursing education scholarship programs, incentive initiatives for preceptors, and other programs that support the long-term needs for the nursing workforce;

5. Evaluate the effectiveness of programs to increase the diversity of and access to nursing education and enhance career mobility, especially for populations that are underrepresented in the nursing profession;

6. Solicit grant funding to pilot innovative approaches to nursing education, including clinical education, and practice;

7. Provide consultation, technical assistance, data, and information related to nursing resources both in the Commonwealth and nationally;

8. Promote strategies to enhance patient safety and quality patient care, including encouraging a safe and healthy workplace environment for nurses;

9. Educate the public, including elementary and secondary students, about opportunities and careers in nursing; and

10. Assist nursing students and graduates with clinical placement and training opportunities.

**2. That the Virginia Health Workforce Development Authority (the Authority) shall convene a work group for the purpose of developing a long-term vision for the health workforce of Virginia. The work group shall produce a strategic plan to recommend and evaluate strategies to increase the recruitment**

and retention of health care professionals in the Commonwealth through review of the needs of specific health care professions and regional health workforces. The work group shall include representatives of state and local governments, educational institutions, and professional and nonprofit organizations. The Authority, through the work group, shall prepare annual reports on the findings of the work group by December 1 of each year for the Governor and General Assembly and may propose policy and other recommendations.

3. That the Virginia Health Workforce Development Authority (the Authority) shall work in collaboration with the Department of Workforce Development and Advancement to develop a plan to increase capacity for reporting and monitoring of health care workforce programs. The Authority shall submit its plan to the Joint Commission on Health Care by October 1, 2025.

4. That the Department of Medical Assistance Services (the Department) shall amend subsection E of 12VAC30-70-281 to increase the listed annual amount for payments from \$100,000 to \$160,000 for each new qualifying residency slot. The Department shall ensure that such amendment is effective no later than September 1, 2025.