

2022 Health Workforce Council Recommendations to the Legislature

The following recommendations were made by the Health Workforce Council in their 2022 report to the Legislature. For further information regarding each item [please refer to the full report](#).

Recommendation 1: Childcare Access

The Council affirms that access to high-quality, reliable and affordable child care is a key community resource for the current and future healthcare workforce. Having child care for their children under age 12 allows the state's healthcare workers to accept and maintain employment. Additionally, child care is vital to future workforce efforts. Health professions students and educators are also highly impacted by child care access challenges. The Council recommends that the Governor and Legislature continue to take action to address the need for dramatically increased access to affordable, high-quality child care services in Washington.

Recommendation 2: Health Workforce Data

The Council recommends that policymakers provide ongoing funding and the necessary authority to the Department of Health to support ongoing collection of healthcare licensee demographic information. This collection effort should include practice location and licensees' racial and ethnic identities as well as other information important to understanding the supply, distribution, and characteristics of the state's health workforce and how they change over time.

Recommendations 3 a-d: Educational Debt Strategies

- a. As a short-term strategy, the Council recommends policymakers appropriate additional funds to support both behavioral health and other health professional loan repayment awards through the Washington Health Corps to address immediate retention challenges within a variety of healthcare settings.
- b. As part of supporting the investments made in loan repayment programs in Washington, the Council recommends policymakers appropriate funds to support administration of the Washington Health Corps and require an evaluation of program outcomes.
- c. As a middle and long-term strategy, policymakers should require eligible healthcare employers to provide Public Service Loan Forgiveness educational materials and information about the Office of the Student Loan Advocate at the Washington Student Achievement Council when hiring a new employee, annually, and at the time of separation. Within already appropriated resources, the Office of the Student Loan Advocate should conduct outreach to eligible healthcare employers and assess if additional staff members are warranted to serve demand.
- d. As a middle- and long-term strategy, if the philanthropically funded conditional grant program demonstrates successful outcomes in training and retaining a diverse master's-level workforce for community behavioral health settings, policymakers should provide funding to continue the program beginning in the 2025-26 biennial budget. Additionally, the Council should determine if successful outcomes could translate to other targeted health professions and make recommendations to expand conditional grant available to include other health occupations beyond behavioral health roles.