

# LTC Workforce Initiative

## DRAFT Policy Recommendations



**LONG-TERM CARE**  
WORKFORCE SUMMIT

2024 | SEATAC, WA

Dr. Donald Smith  
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# LTC Workforce Initiative

- Policymakers funded the three-year project in 2022
  - Funding ends June 30, 2025
  - Continuation request (through 2030) in development
- Lead agency: Workforce Board
- Initiative members – a statewide collaborative represented by a range of professional disciplines





# LTC Workforce Initiative Subcommittees

- LTC Ecosystem
- HR and Worker Support
- Education and Career Pathways
- Rural and Underserved Communities





# Foundational Policy Items

*Will be advanced in the 2024 Legislative Report*



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## Long-Term Care (LTC) Reimbursement Rates

- To address critical recruitment and retention needs, policymakers should fund LTC reimbursement rates at the level necessary for LTC providers to provide competitive wages and benefits, including training benefits, and ensure rates keep pace with inflation.
- The additional reimbursement should be specifically dedicated to worker compensation in support of workforce stability, to the extent possible.



## Continuation Funding of the LTC Workforce Initiative

- Extend funding for the Workforce Board's LTC Workforce Initiative for an additional five years.
- Created by a state budget proviso in 2022.
- Policymakers receive detailed analyses of the LTC workforce and yearly reports with recommendations for action.
- This request will include funding for small transformation grants that would permit LTC providers to test promising practices for improving care outcomes, with the goal of increasing workforce retention.



## LTC Registered Apprenticeship Program

- The LPN Registered Apprenticeship Program has been a collaborative effort since 2021. Current funding expires in FY2025.
- Includes employers w/ more than 50 Washington LTC facilities, community and technical colleges, state agencies, and the apprenticeship sponsor, the Washington Health Care Association (WHCA).
- Continued funding (through June 30, 2027, at minimum) will ensure the program's initial two cohorts are supported to complete their apprenticeship program, and better set the program up for long-term sustainability.



# Recommendations for Review and Prioritization



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## **1. Support the development of a robust statewide residency program for LTC nurses through funding and programmatic support.**

- Develop and maintain a robust LTC residency program accessible to any facility or LTC nurse in Washington state.
- Program should include funding for stipends to participating facilities, particularly in the first 2-5 years of operation.
- The need for financial support may decrease as the residency contributes to workforce development and stability.



## **2. Continue funding for the Washington State Student Nurse Preceptorship Grant Program.**

- Establish continuing funding for the preceptorship program at WABON in 2023.
- First report (due September 30, 2025) will provide data on the outcomes and its effectiveness to secure adequate preceptors and clinical placements for prelicensure nursing students in Washington.
- Already, precepted experiences have increased in each of the seven quarters of the program. In 2023 there were 1269 precepted experiences, and in 2024 (YTD), there have been 2137 precepted experiences – a 68.4% increase in the last year.



## **3. Provide funding for capacity assessment and potential development/expansion of mobile/community skills labs to support healthcare training in rural and underserved communities.**

- Mobile/remote skills labs create opportunities in communities that do not have established facilities.
- Skills labs in communities where LTC providers live and work reduces the complications these workers experience while trying to complete training.
- Prior to site funding, a needs assessment should review the need for training programs/centers, and determine resource needs to operate.



# Benefits and Worker Support Recs (1/3)

## **4. Promote and support employee-centered management training for supervisors across all LTC venues.**

- The relationship between a frontline caregiver and their manager is a critical component in skills improvement and retention.
- In employee-centered management, an emphasis is made on support of the personal and professional growth of the employee.
- This style of leadership has the potential to improve the ability of managers to support their staff, and ultimately, improve retention and care outcomes for clients.



# Benefits and Worker Support Recs (2/3)

## **5. Support workforce policies that offer home care aides consistent hours per pay period to ensure a dependable source of income.**

- Variability of hours, particularly in the in-home care settings, can impact retention and create major challenges for families on a limited budget.
- This situation is particularly difficult in the case of the loss of a client, or unexpected reductions in hours due to client hospitalization or other circumstances outside of the caregiver's control.
- Policymakers should explore incentives for implementing or piloting strategies supporting a predictable number of hours for home care providers.



## **6. Promote the distribution of information on opportunities for loan forgiveness and repayment programs for LTC providers.**

- The Health Workforce Council recommended (2023) requiring eligible healthcare employers to provide information about the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program and the Office of the Student Loan Advocate when hiring new employees, annually, and at the time of employee separation.
- Policymakers should encourage the distribution of information among eligible LTC service providers and employees.



## **7. Double the current number of DSHS Quality Improvement Program Nurses to allow for more support and technical assistance for LTC providers.**

- Request would double existing capacity (from 6 to 12) of technical support staff in the Quality Improvement Program (QIP).
- DSHS shows a reduction in the number of citations in facilities where QIP Nurses provide technical support, improving care practices, staff confidence and retention, and ultimately correlating with improved quality of care for the residents.
- With program expansion, review options for increasing the scope of the role to provide support in additional program areas.



## **8. Provide permanent funding for the DSHS (AL TSA/HCS) Workforce Development Team.**

- The grant-funded team was established to advance recruitment of direct care workers.
- Work has targeted marketing, education and training, and strategies for retaining highly trained staff in long-term care.
- Nearly 1000 interactions from individuals interested in being a caregiver in the last year.
- Permanent funding is crucial for this team to continue the momentum, uninterrupted, at a time when the lack of frontline care workers is critical now and into the coming decades.





## **9. Assess the use, ethical considerations, and potential for expansion of existing/developing technologies in LTC settings.**

- If ethical issues are addressed, developing technologies have the potential to improve efficiency and reduce the administrative burden in LTC to allow a focus on direct care.
- Conduct an industry-supported assessment of the use and capacity for technological interventions across LTC settings, including a review of implementation costs.
- Engage with the Artificial Intelligence (AI) Task Force under the Attorney General's office to explore opportunities to better understand the legal and ethical implications of AI in LTC.



## **10. Continue and expand the marketing campaign for recruitment of healthcare personnel in LTC.**

- Continue/expand the existing marketing and outreach strategy to promote LTC for all provider levels, with an emphasis on rural and underserved communities.
- Funding was provided for this work in the 2023 Legislative Session and runs through 2025. Current funding leverages existing work at DSHS and other LTC marketing efforts, amplifying the impact.
- An ongoing effort would continue the encouragement for LTC as a healthcare career of choice.

# Questions about the recs?

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# Recommendation Feedback Instructions

- One recommendation has been placed at 10 tables
- Facilitator and note takers are pre-assigned to each table
- 10 minutes to share technical edits and ideas about how to strengthen the recommendation at your table
- Please rotate two times
- After final rotation, take a short break for the facilitators to compile notes and prepare to report out after the break

# See you back here in 10 minutes

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