

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2020 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

Senate Bill 707

BY SENATORS RUCKER, CLINE, MARONEY, PLYMALE,

TAKUBO, AND STOLLINGS

[Introduced February 5, 2020; referred
to the Committee on Education]

1 A BILL to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding thereto a new section,
 2 designated §18-2E-11a, relating to nursing career pathways; convening the West Virginia
 3 nursing career pathway workgroup; and developing and implementing a career pathway
 4 to address the unmet need for nursing assistants, licensed practical nurses, registered
 5 nurses, and registered nurses with a bachelor’s degree in nursing.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 2E. HIGH QUALITY EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS.

§18-2E-11a. Nursing career pathways.

1 (a) The Legislature finds that:

2 (1) There are numerous reports relating that the nursing shortage is causing currently
 3 employed nurses to be overworked; and that hospitals are bringing in travel nurses from other
 4 states;

5 (2) While the recent passage of the Advance Career Education and West Virginia Invests
 6 Grant programs legislation would address nursing shortages along with addressing other
 7 shortage areas, having a sufficient number of qualified nurses is of such importance to the health
 8 of the citizens of the state, that additional efforts should be made to ensure that there is an
 9 adequate number of nurses to meet the state’s health care needs as soon as possible; and

10 (3) Providing a seamless process for students pursuing careers in nursing from high
 11 school through attainment of a nursing credential or degree would assist in ensuring an adequate
 12 nursing workforce.

13 (b) The State Superintendent, the Chancellor for Higher Education, and the Chancellor for
 14 Community and Technical College Education shall convene the West Virginia nursing career
 15 pathway workgroup consisting of:

16 (1) Representatives of health care providers that need nurses and could potentially
 17 provide clinical space. Due to the importance of health care providers providing clinical space,
 18 as many representatives of health care providers as possible, especially the largest health care

19 providers, shall be invited to be members of the workgroup, provide input, and be encouraged to
20 provide clinical space. Invitations to join the workgroup at least shall be extended to the West
21 Virginia Health Care Association and the West Virginia Hospital Association;

22 (2) A representative of the West Virginia Department of Education;

23 (3) A representative of the Higher Education Policy Commission;

24 (4) A representative of the Council for Community and Technical College Education;

25 (5) Representatives of institutions of higher education in West Virginia;

26 (6) A representative of the Board for Registered professional nurses;

27 (7) A representative of the Board of Examiners for Licensed Practical Nurses; and

28 (8) Any other persons that the State Superintendent, the Chancellor for Higher Education,
29 and the Chancellor for Community and Technical College Education determine beneficial.

30 (c) The West Virginia nursing career pathway work group shall be charged with developing
31 and implementing a career pathway to address the unmet need for nursing assistants, licensed
32 practical nurses, registered nurses, and registered nurses with a bachelor's degree in nursing.

33 The nursing program of study will begin in high school and progress through college, providing
34 employment opportunity with industry partners and pathway re-entry at specified student
35 attainment points: nursing assistant certification, licensed practical nurse diploma and licensure,
36 registered nurse associate degree and licensure, and bachelor of science in nursing completion.

37 The career pathway will align secondary to postsecondary nursing programs to increase
38 credential attainment for a broad and diverse student population within operational delivery
39 models that are effective, affordable and sustainable.

40 (1) The career pathway shall include participating high school students enrolling in a
41 specified curriculum of college preparatory, career and technical health science courses, and dual
42 college-high school credit courses as well as participating in career experiences through a health
43 care provider.

44 (2) Students shall have the opportunity to apply for admission to a Practical Nursing

45 program at a community and technical college.

46 (3) Upon completion of a Practical Nursing program, students shall have the opportunity
47 to apply for admission to a Licensed Practical Nursing to Registered Nurse Associate Degree
48 Program.

49 (4) Upon completion of a Licensed Practical Nursing to Registered Nurse Associate
50 Degree Program, students then shall have the opportunity to apply for admission a Registered
51 Nurse to Bachelor of Science in Nursing program.

52 (5) The career pathway shall be made available to all students statewide beginning with
53 the cohort of students entering ninth grade during the 2021-2022 school year.

54 (d) The State Superintendent, the Chancellor for Higher Education, the Chancellor for
55 Community and Technical College Education, or any combination thereof, shall report to the
56 legislative oversight commission on education accountability every month that the commission
57 meets on the progress in implementing the career pathway up until such time as the career
58 pathway is fully implemented statewide.

59 (e) In establishing the nursing career pathways, the State Superintendent, the Chancellor
60 for Higher Education, the Chancellor of Community and Technical College Education, and the
61 workgroup created pursuant to subsection (c) of this section shall consider the following in
62 establishing the pathways:

63 (1) If the career pathway is difficult to implement due to nursing programs being at full
64 capacity, the workgroup shall explore the use of online programs currently in existence or the
65 creation of new online programs in overcoming any lack of capacity in the current nursing
66 programs and to make programs more accessible to students; and

67 (2) The nursing career pathways shall include the use of any available financial assistance
68 in order to minimize, or if possible, eliminate tuition costs for students and their families. This
69 assistance can include, if a student is eligible, the Federal Pell Grant Program, the Higher
70 Education Grant Program, the PROMISE Scholarship Program, the West Virginia Invests Grant

71 Program, and any other grants or scholarships that might be available. Health care providers in
72 need of nurses also shall be encouraged to establish scholarship programs to help cover tuition
73 costs.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to convene the West Virginia nursing career pathway workgroup for developing and implementing a career pathway to address the unmet need for nursing assistants, licensed practical nurses, registered nurses, and registered nurses with a bachelor's degree in nursing.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.