



General Assembly

February Session, 2002

Raised Bill No. 367

LCO No. 1565

Referred to Committee on Select Committee on Workforce
Development

Introduced by:
(WFD)

***AN ACT ADDRESSING THE SHORTAGE OF NURSES, ALLIED
HEALTH PROFESSIONALS, DENTAL HYGIENISTS AND DENTAL
ASSISTANTS.***

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General
Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 10a-162a of the general statutes is repealed and
2 the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

3 (a) The Board of Governors of Higher Education, in consultation
4 with the State Board of Examiners for Nursing and the Commissioner
5 of Public Health, shall administer a [scholarship program for nursing
6 education within the state and shall establish a program for the
7 forgiveness of loans provided by the state to residents for nursing
8 education within the state. The loans shall be forgiven if the resident
9 remains in the nursing field in Connecticut for five years. For purposes
10 of this section, "nursing education" includes any program of study and
11 courses taken to enter or to advance in the profession or to upgrade
12 knowledge and skills. The board of governors, in consultation with the
13 State Board of Examiners for Nursing and the Commissioner of Public
14 Health, shall adopt regulations in accordance with the provisions of

15 chapter 54 to establish procedures to administer the scholarship
16 program for nursing education and the program for the forgiveness of
17 loans provided by the state to residents for nursing education]
18 Connecticut nursing and allied health care profession incentive
19 program.

20 (b) Within available appropriations, the program shall provide loans
21 to students who are entering the final two years of a nursing or allied
22 health care program or enrolled at a nursing or allied health care
23 program at a Connecticut regional community-technical college or
24 other program accredited by the Department of Higher Education. For
25 purposes of this subsection, "allied health care program" means a
26 program that qualifies students to work as allied health care
27 professionals, and "allied health care professional" means a
28 professional or paraprofessional who is qualified by special training,
29 education, skills and experience in providing health care, treatment
30 and diagnostic services, under the supervision of or in collaboration
31 with a licensed practitioner, and includes, but is not limited to,
32 licensed nurses, certified nurse assistants, home health aides, physician
33 assistants, and qualified technologists, therapists and technicians. The
34 department shall ensure that at least ten per cent of the students
35 receiving loans under this subsection are minority students who
36 transfer from a regional community-technical college in this state.

37 (c) Any student who receives a loan under subsection (b) of this
38 section, and who is employed in an acute care hospital in this state or
39 any other health care institution in this state, as defined in subsection
40 (a) of section 19a-490, shall be eligible for reimbursement of federal or
41 state education loans up to a maximum of two thousand five hundred
42 dollars per year for up to four years of employment at such acute care
43 hospital or other health care institution.

44 (d) For the fiscal years ending June 30, 2002, and June 30, 2003, the
45 Department of Higher Education may allocate up to five per cent of
46 the funds appropriated to the department for purposes of this section

47 for program administration, promotion, recruitment and retention
48 activities that are designed to increase the number of students
49 pursuing nursing and allied health care profession careers in acute
50 care hospitals and other health care institutions in this state.

51 Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2002*) Within available
52 appropriations, the Commissioners of Education, Higher Education
53 and Public Health and the Labor Commissioner, in consultation with
54 the superintendent of the vocational-technical school system shall
55 review, evaluate and recommend improvements for certification and
56 degree programs for the education and training of dental hygienists
57 and dental assistants in order to increase the number of students who
58 enter and successfully complete such programs.

59 Sec. 3. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2002*) (a) The Board of Governors
60 of Higher Education, in consultation with the Commissioner of Public
61 Health, the Board of Trustees of the Community-Technical Colleges
62 and the Board of Trustees of the Connecticut State University System
63 shall:

64 (1) Administer a scholarship program for dental hygienist and
65 dental assistant education within the state and shall establish a
66 program for the forgiveness of loans provided by the state to residents
67 for dental hygienist and dental assistant education within the state.
68 The loans shall be forgiven if the resident remains in the dental field in
69 this state for five years. For purposes of this section, "dental hygienist
70 education" includes any programs of study and courses taken to earn a
71 degree as a dental hygienist or to upgrade knowledge and skills, and
72 "dental assistant education" includes any programs of study and
73 courses taken to earn a certificate as a dental assistant or to upgrade
74 knowledge and skills. The Board of Governors, in consultation with
75 the Commissioner of Public Health, shall adopt regulations, in
76 accordance with the provisions of chapter 54 of the general statutes, to
77 establish procedures to administer the scholarship program for dental
78 hygienist and dental assistant education and the program for the

79 forgiveness of loans provided by the state to residents for dental
80 hygienist or dental assistant education. Such regulations shall limit
81 scholarship grants to matriculating sophomores and juniors attending
82 a public or independent institution of higher education in this state.

83 (2) Develop an initiative to expand dental hygienist and dental
84 assistant academic programs to promote increased enrollment and
85 retention in such programs in higher education.

86 (3) Recruit students for dental hygienist and dental assistant
87 academic programs who have traditionally been underrepresented in
88 such occupations.

89 (4) Explore distance learning and articulation agreements to
90 facilitate degree enhancement activities for students enrolled in dental
91 hygienist and dental assistant academic programs.

92 (b) Not later than January 1, 2004, the Commissioner of Higher
93 Education shall submit a status report in accordance with the
94 provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes on the establishment
95 and operation of the scholarship program authorized under subsection
96 (a) of this section to the joint standing committee of the General
97 Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education and to
98 the select committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of
99 matters relating to workforce development.

100 Sec. 4. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2002*) (a) The Office of Workforce
101 Competitiveness, in conjunction with the Labor Department, shall
102 coordinate with the Department of Higher Education and the Board of
103 Trustees of the Community-Technical Colleges to ensure that credit
104 courses in radiological technology, pharmacy and laboratory
105 technology are (1) offered in the state on a regional basis, and (2)
106 counted toward the fulfillment of requirements for state licensure.

107 (b) Within available appropriations, the Board of Trustees of the
108 Community-Technical Colleges shall expand existing programs of

109 study in radiological technology and laboratory technology by offering
110 weekend and evening courses in such programs.

111 (c) The Office of Workforce Competitiveness, in conjunction with
112 the Labor Department, shall develop a strategy to encourage hospitals
113 in this state to establish hospital-based training programs in the areas
114 of radiological technology and laboratory technology which focus on
115 transitioning existing health care employees into such areas.

116 (d) Within available appropriations, the Board of Governors of
117 Higher Education, in consultation with the Commissioner of Public
118 Health, shall administer a low-interest student loan program for
119 residents enrolled in programs of study or taking courses leading
120 toward state licensure in radiological technology, laboratory
121 technology or pharmacy. The Board of Governors, in consultation with
122 the Commissioner of Public Health, shall adopt regulations, in
123 accordance with the provisions of chapter 54 of the general statutes, to
124 establish (1) procedures to administer the low-interest student loan
125 program, and (2) participation guidelines, which shall be based on
126 income.

127 (e) (1) The Board of Governors of Higher Education, in consultation
128 with the Commissioner of Public Health, the Board of Trustees for
129 Community-Technical Colleges and the Board of Trustees of the
130 Connecticut State University System shall establish a program for the
131 forgiveness of loans provided by the state to residents for radiological
132 technology, laboratory technology and pharmacy education within the
133 state. The loans shall be forgiven if the resident obtains a state license
134 and remains employed at a hospital in this state for at least two years
135 after obtaining such license.

136 (2) Not later than January 1, 2004, the Commissioner of Higher
137 Education shall submit a status report in accordance with the
138 provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes on the establishment
139 and operation of the loan forgiveness program authorized under
140 subdivision (1) of this subsection to the joint standing committee of the

141 General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education
142 and to the select committee of the General Assembly having
143 cognizance of matters relating to workforce development.

This act shall take effect as follows:	
Section 1	<i>from passage</i>
Sec. 2	<i>October 1, 2002</i>
Sec. 3	<i>October 1, 2002</i>
Sec. 4	<i>October 1, 2002</i>

Statement of Purpose:

To address the shortage of dental hygienists, dental assistants, nurses, radiological technologists and other allied health care professionals in this state.

[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]