

February 11, 2020

Dear Members of the Connecticut State Legislature,

Connecticut needs more nurses. With expanded healthcare benefits of CT residents and an aging population, Bachelor's prepared nurses and Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs, including Nurse Practitioners) are critical for increasing access to healthcare services and coordination of care for individuals and families. The projected demand for Bachelor's prepared nurses is expected to grow 9.2% annually over the next decade, while the demand for APRNs is projected to grow 28.8% (U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration, 2020, <https://projectionscentral.com/Projections/LongTerm> ). However, the major constraint in preparing more Bachelor's prepared nurses, and particularly APRNs, is the limited number of preceptors available to oversee the clinical experiences of students in training. As evidence of this critical constraint, there were 9728 qualified applicants for Connecticut's prelicensure registered nurse degree programs in 2017, and while 2368 students were enrolled across the 18 programs in Connecticut, 7357 students were turned away.

Preceptors, working clinicians (APRNs, MDs, or other Master's prepared healthcare providers) who mentor and oversee the clinical performance of students, play an extremely important role in the education process of nurses and APRN. This apprenticeship model is used throughout the educational system of healthcare professionals to ensure that each student has the range of knowledge and skills to provide safe and high quality care. Preceptors also play a pivotal role by introducing the students to the communities that they serve, and this is a crucial point – the more students are exposed to these populations, the greater the chances that they will stay and continue to serve these communities once they graduate. This is important for Connecticut and the residents who receive healthcare.

Due to our current healthcare climate that prioritizes reimbursement and productivity (the number of patients seen per hour), preceptors are being incentivized to not take students. In addition, some clinical sites are requesting up to \$5000 per student/semester to offset the costs in lost productivity; payment that often does not go directly to the preceptor.

This bill, "AN ACT TO ESTABLISH A TAX CREDIT FOR PROVIDERS OF CLINICAL NURSING EXPERIENCES", will increase the number of preceptors available to students and importantly, will increase the likelihood that nurse graduates will stay within Connecticut to serve the communities they connect with during the clinical education. While it does not provide a solution to the fees that healthcare institutions are charging for student placements, it will help to alleviate the pressure felt by preceptors, giving them a direct benefit for their service to preparing the next generation of Bachelor's prepared nurses and APRNs in our state.

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