Bolstering Healthcare Workforce

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Executive Summary

Purpose

To strengthen Texas' healthcare workforce pipeline by expanding clinical training capacity through enhanced faculty and preceptor availability, improved coordination of clinical placements and sustained state investment in collaborative and scalable workforce solutions.

Addressing these constraints is essential to increasing graduate output, improving workforce readiness and ensuring access to high-quality care across urban and rural communities.

Background and Need

The 2024 Texas Healthcare Workforce Task Force report *Building Texas' Future Healthcare Workforce* noted that 88% of Texas' counties are designated at health professional shortage areas (HPSAs), impacting access to care for over 6 million Texas residents living in a HPSA. Texas' ability to produce nurses and allied health professionals is increasingly constrained not by student demand, but by limited access to qualified faculty, preceptors and clinical training sites. As documented by the Texas Healthcare Workforce Task Force report, nearly every stakeholder identified clinical training capacity as the primary bottleneck in workforce expansion. Texas must encourage educational institutions, healthcare providers and workforce boards to better coordinate across complex regulatory, operational and financial environments to deliver hands-on training while maintaining patient safety and workforce stability.

Regional partnerships across the state demonstrate that collaboration works. Rural associations, centralized placement systems, and academic-practice partnerships have significantly increased graduate output, reduced unused clinical capacity and improved job placement outcomes. However, these models often require extensive startup effort, legal coordination and technical expertise – resulting in duplicative work and uneven adoption across regions. Without targeted state-level support, many communities lack the capacity to replicate proven solutions, leaving workforce shortages unaddressed despite demonstrated demand.

Key Themes in Building Texas' Future Healthcare Workforce

- **Collaboration is the primary driver of capacity** – Local and regional partnerships that align education providers, healthcare employers and workforce boards consistently outperform siloed approaches.

- **Clinical placement inefficiencies limit growth** – Fragmented scheduling systems and unused clinical shifts reduce training capacity even where workforce demand is high.

- **Faculty and preceptor shortages are structural, not temporary** – Competing clinical workloads, lack of shared employment models and insufficient incentives discourage participation in teaching roles.

- **Innovation requires evaluation and scalability** – Promising models exist, but the state lacks a systematic mechanism to assess, refine and expand them statewide.

Potential Proposals for Legislative Reform

To address these challenges, legislation focused on two key areas would encourage workforce growth and efficiency:

- **Investments in Education and Future Healthcare Professionals**
    - ***Fund Nursing Faculty and Preceptor Programs***
      Advance funding for the unfunded components of Senate Bill 25, including clinical site preceptor grants and nursing faculty innovation programs.
    - ***Sustain Scholarship and Loan Repayment Programs***
      Continue long-standing investments that reduce financial barriers for students and incentivize entry into high-need healthcare professions.
- **Investments in Collaborations and Partnerships**
    - ***Enhance State Support for Regional Collaboration***
      Establish a statewide advisory structure and toolkit to assist communities in developing healthcare workforce partnerships, reducing duplication of effort and accelerating implementation of proven models.
    - ***Implement a Statewide Clinical Placement Coordination Framework***
      Conduct a feasibility study to develop regional clinical placement portals that optimize scheduling, reduce unused capacity, and support equitable access for educational programs statewide.

Conclusion

By investing in faculty and preceptor capacity, streamlining clinical training infrastructure and scaling proven partnerships, Texas can expand its healthcare workforce sustainably while improving care access and workforce stability. Texas also has the opportunity to improve its healthcare workforce by moving beyond isolated interventions toward a future of coordinated, data-informed and regionally responsive solutions. Taken together, these recommendations provide a practical roadmap to address immediate shortages while building a resilient system prepared to meet the state's long-term healthcare needs.

Exhibit

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board | Texas Healthcare Workforce Task Force
Building Texas' Future Healthcare Workforce | *Final Report* | *October 2024*