



Joint Committee on Health Care Financing to hear testimony on H1162, An act relative to the health care workforce on Wednesday, May 8, 2007, 1:00 P.M. in Room B-1. Expected to testify are:

Don Gillis, Executive Director, [Massachusetts Workforce Board Association](#)
Paul Levy, President & Chief Executive Officer, [Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center](#)
Enid Eckstein, Vice President Health Systems, [1199 SEIU United HealthCare Workers East](#)
Jerry Rubin, President and Chief Executive Officer, [Jewish Vocational Services-Boston](#)

***The Health Care Workforce Development Imperative
A Strategy for Change***

**FACT SHEET
[H1162](#)**

SPONSORS OF H1162:

Michael J. Rodrigues, Robert M. Koczera, Daniel E. Bosley, Susan C. Tucker, John D. Keenan, David M. Torrissi, Antonio F. D. Cabral, Thomas M. McGee, John F. Quinn, Christopher N. Speranzo, Richard T. Moore, Peter J. Koutoujian and Stephen R. Canessa

BACKGROUND ON H1162

- There is a public health and safety crisis in Massachusetts as a result of large and persistent worker shortages at all levels and in all occupations in the healthcare sector, the Commonwealth must establish a set of strategic interventions to solve current worker shortages and to prevent such shortages in the future.
- The problems facing the healthcare industry that lead to severe workforce shortages in critical occupations are too complex for any one sector or state agency to solve on its own. Massachusetts must develop a comprehensive approach to address the healthcare workforce shortage, creating system alignment among government, employers and higher education to address the immediate and long-term needs of the health care industry.
- The Healthcare sector is the largest in Massachusetts with nearly 460,000 employees in 2006, accounting for 14% of Massachusetts jobs and is in each of the 351 cities and towns.¹
- Healthcare added nearly 40,000 jobs from 2001 to 2006 when the state lost nearly 100,000 jobs during the recession from December 2000 through March 2003. Hospitals accounted for nearly 1/3rd or 12,800 of these new jobs¹
- Healthcare is projected to add another 50,000 jobs through 2014.²
- The job vacancy rate increased more than 50% from 3.8 percent or 12,530 in the 2nd quarter of 2005 to 4.4 percent or 19,150 in the 2nd quarter of 2006 accounting for 1 in 5 job vacancies in Massachusetts surpassing all other major industries in job vacancies.³

SUMMARY OF H1162

¹ BLS, CES data, seasonally unadjusted

² DWD, Job Projections 2004 – 2014

³ DWD, Job Vacancy Survey

- The legislation creates a healthcare workforce council to review existing data regarding the current state of the healthcare workforce and establish a set of evidence-based priorities and specific performance measures for Massachusetts' education, higher education, and workforce development systems that will serve as indicators of success in solving the healthcare worker shortages. The 29 member council will include health care employers, labor, higher education and workforce training and health care organizations

- The health care workforce council will work with representatives from those systems to develop programmatic strategies to meet specific measurement standards over a four-year period.

- The health care workforce council will seek to address the most critical problems hindering the growth and improvement of the Massachusetts healthcare workforce. Including:
 - reducing the incidence of persistent job vacancies to below two percent;
 - expanding the capacity of the Commonwealth's public and private nursing education system, with particular emphasis on increasing the number of qualified nursing faculty;
 - improving the quality of nursing through improved nursing education and professional development opportunities; ensuring effective, performance-based coordination across funding and service streams;
 - responding to regional differences in healthcare needs and workforce demographics, with particular emphasis on medically underserved areas or areas experiencing significant healthcare disparities;
 - increasing ethnic and racial diversity in the workforce;
 - modernizing curricula and student laboratories to better prepare the healthcare workforce to perform effectively in a rapidly changing technological environment;
 - providing upgrade training and professional development to ensure that Massachusetts retains its world class status in the healthcare and biosciences industries;
 - developing regional strategies in partnership with workforce investment boards, including career ladders and apprenticeships, that support entry-level and paraprofessional healthcare workers to progress to professional licensed positions and better wages; encouraging middle and high school students to explore careers in the health care industry and prepare students for post-secondary education and jobs in health care
 - creating bridge programs at all of the state's community colleges to increase basic skills and prepare incumbent workers for career advancement in the health care industry;
 - standardize entrance requirements, curriculum and graduation standards across two and four year nursing and allied health education programs.

- The legislation proposes to develop pilot projects using **existing workforce development and training resources**. These will target:
 - the goal of rapidly increasing the number of nurses and allied health workers
 - enhancing the role of the system of public higher education, as institutions and in partnerships with other stakeholders, in meeting the short and long-term workforce challenges in the nursing and allied health professions
 - the development and use of innovative curricula, courses, programs and modes of delivering education in nursing and allied health professions for faculty and students in these fields
 - activities with the growing network of stakeholders in the nursing and allied health professions to create, implement, share and make broadly and publicly available best practices and innovative programs relative to instruction, development of partnerships and expanding and maintaining faculty and student involvement in careers in these fields;
 - strengthening the institutional capacity to develop and implement long-term programs and policies to respond effectively to these challenges.

IMPLICATIONS

Healthcare is Massachusetts largest and one of its fastest growing sectors. The number of job vacancies has increased in the healthcare industry as well as in healthcare related occupations and is constraining growth potential. Higher Education and Workforce Development have responded to some of this need, but the issue needs the full attention of all sectors of the health care community, state political leaders and agencies. This legislation sets the framework for measurable results in increasing the health care workforce pipeline, reducing critical vacancies and improving the quality of care.