

Issue Brief – Nursing Initiative

NUMBER USHE-05

SUMMARY

The Legislative Fiscal Analyst recommends funding for the Nursing Initiative for FY 2008 in the amount of \$500,000 in ongoing funding. In conjunction with this initiative, the health care industry has pledged to donate \$1 million each year over the next three years to supplement the State funding to help resolve the shortage of RNs in the State.

OBJECTIVE

The health care industry is experiencing a shortage in staffing its nursing workforce. There is the need to educate more nurses, but there is also the need to increase the number of masters and doctorate degree “nurse educators” to be able to expand the capacity to train those nursing students.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

Both here in Utah and nationally, there is a looming nurse shortage. The factors contributing to the shortage here in Utah include the following:

- Growth in the population, especially among the elderly
- Longer life spans and more chronic illnesses
- The aging of the current nursing workforce
- Nurses’ salaries and general working conditions

In many other states, the nursing shortage is due to fewer people wanting to go into the profession. In Utah, the problem is not the lack of applicants, but the capacity of the institutions with the faculty to provide the necessary education.

The Analyst recommends funding in the amount of \$500,000 for the Nursing Initiative. The Analyst recommends the distribution as shown in the following table.

USHE Nursing Initiative	
FY 2008 Funding Recommendation	
	<u>Ongoing</u>
University of Utah	\$89,800
Weber State University	72,100
Southern Utah University	80,300
Dixie State College	82,600
College of Eastern Utah	35,100
Utah Valley State College	39,300
Salt Lake Community College	100,800
Total	<u><u>\$500,000</u></u>

This distribution is based on the FY 2007 ongoing funding (\$250,000) plus a factor for the increase in the number of nursing students at the specific institutions over the past three years. Those institutions with the highest number of new nursing students would receive a larger portion of the incremental funding.

