

FY 2009 Issue Brief – HED – Health Professions Initiative

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SUMMARY

The Legislature has provided funding for the Nursing Initiative for several years to help resolve the shortage of RNs in the State. As the nation's citizens age, it is becoming more important to have not only more nurses, but other health care providers as well. The Analyst recommends the Subcommittee place \$4 million on its priority list to help institutions expand their capacity in training health care professionals.

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 the distribution of the \$4 million for the Health Professions Initiative as shown below.

University of Utah	\$1,050,000
Utah State University	672,500
Weber State University	509,000
Southern Utah University	222,900
Snow College	115,000
Dixie State College	156,200
College of Eastern Utah	59,900
Utah Valley State College	587,300
Salt Lake Community College	<u>627,200</u>
Total	<u>\$4,000,000</u>

