

1           A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION relating to the establishment of a task force to  
2 complete a study to identify strategies for maintaining an adequate supply of healthcare  
3 workers in the Commonwealth.

4           WHEREAS, in Kentucky and across the nation, there are growing concerns about  
5 the increasing shortage of healthcare workers; and

6           WHEREAS, Kentucky lacks adequate and accurate data on the supply of healthcare  
7 workers necessary to determine the extent of the shortage of healthcare workers and to  
8 project future needs; and

9           WHEREAS, employers are reporting shortages of healthcare workers; and

10          WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought to light both the shortage of  
11 healthcare workers in Kentucky and the need for an adequate healthcare workforce; and

12          WHEREAS, according to data from the Bureau of Health Workforce, Kentucky has  
13 just 13.65 nurses per 1,000 people, ranking it 29th for the lowest ratio by a state; and

14          WHEREAS, registered nurses and advanced practice registered nurses are  
15 maldistributed throughout the Commonwealth. According to the University of Kentucky  
16 Center of Excellence in Rural Health, 38% of Kentucky's registered nurses practice in  
17 rural areas while 62% practice in urban counties; 37% of Kentucky's advanced practice  
18 registered nurses practice in rural counties while 63% practice in urban counties; and 31%  
19 of the advanced practice registered nurses in the Commonwealth work in Jefferson and  
20 Fayette Counties alone; and

21          WHEREAS, according to a whitepaper produced by researchers from the University  
22 of Kentucky, the University of Louisville, and the University of Pikeville, Kentucky is  
23 experiencing severe shortages of primary care physicians. Kentucky ranks 43rd in the  
24 nation for its number of primary care physicians per 100,000 people. The Commonwealth  
25 retains only approximately 55 new primary care physicians each year and recruits another  
26 55 or 60 annually from out of state. Nonetheless, the annual total of new primary care  
27 physicians in Kentucky still falls short of the 124 new primary care physicians that must

1 be added each year to avoid worsening the state's shortage and well below the 246 new  
 2 primary care physicians per year that Kentucky must add to reach the national median in  
 3 the coming decade; and

4 WHEREAS, the University of Kentucky Center of Excellence in Rural Health,  
 5 utilizing data gathered from the Kentucky Board of Dentistry, reported a maldistribution  
 6 of dentists in Kentucky. Seven Kentucky counties do not have a dentist; 60 out of  
 7 Kentucky's 120 counties have less than five working dentists; and 33% of the dentists in  
 8 Kentucky are working in either Fayette County or Jefferson County; and

9 WHEREAS, the Kentucky Department for Public Health, along with the Health  
 10 Resources and Services Administration, has designated multiple counties throughout the  
 11 Commonwealth as health professional shortage areas, medically underserved areas, or  
 12 both; and

13 WHEREAS, reductions in reimbursement rates from governmental payors and  
 14 private insurers have made it difficult for many providers to maintain salary levels  
 15 necessary to recruit and retain healthcare professionals; and

16 WHEREAS, the quality of patient care in acute and nonacute settings is dependent  
 17 on maintaining an adequate supply of healthcare workers in the Commonwealth;

18 NOW, THEREFORE,

19 ***Be it resolved by the House of Representatives of the General Assembly of the***  
 20 ***Commonwealth of Kentucky, the Senate concurring therein:***

21 ➔Section 1. The Legislative Research Commission is directed to establish the  
 22 Healthcare Workforce Shortage Task Force of the Legislative Research Commission to:

- 23 (1) Identify strategies to enhance recruitment and retention of healthcare workers in the  
 24 workforce in the Commonwealth, especially in underserved rural and urban areas;
- 25 (2) Identify strategies to reverse the growing shortage of healthcare workers, especially  
 26 in rural and urban areas;
- 27 (3) Identify strategies to increase the number of individuals choosing a career in

- 1 healthcare, including the creation and expansion of scholarships;
- 2 (4) Identify strategies for the uniform collection of data from licensure boards to gauge  
3 workforce supply and employment needs and to plan for education and training;
- 4 (5) Identify strategies to ensure the thorough distribution of healthcare workers  
5 throughout the Commonwealth so that Kentuckians in each county have access to  
6 quality healthcare;
- 7 (6) Recommend measures to ensure the support and development of educational and  
8 certificate opportunities to enhance and grow the healthcare workforce and ways to  
9 expand the use of technology to prepare the type of competently trained graduates  
10 required by employers;
- 11 (7) Identify best practice retention models within the employment environment;
- 12 (8) Identify strategies to ensure that governmental payors and private insurers  
13 adequately cover labor costs;
- 14 (9) Identify the roles and responsibilities of private and public organizations in  
15 addressing healthcare workforce shortage issues;
- 16 (10) Gather information on work completed by other groups, states, and the federal  
17 government related to the healthcare workforce shortage;
- 18 (11) Assess the healthcare degree and certificate programs available in Kentucky to  
19 ensure that the programs are of the appropriate scale to meet the needs of the  
20 Commonwealth; and
- 21 (12) Identify any state healthcare programs that are in need of assistance in fulfilling  
22 their mission.

23 ➔Section 2. The task force shall have the following members, with final  
24 membership of the task force being subject to the consideration and approval of the  
25 Legislative Research Commission:

- 26 (1) Three members of the House of Representatives chosen by the Speaker of the  
27 House of Representatives, one of whom shall be designated as co-chair;

1 (2) One member of the House of Representatives chosen by the House Minority Floor  
2 Leader;

3 (3) Three members of the Senate chosen by the President of the Senate, one of whom  
4 shall be designated as co-chair; and

5 (4) One member of the Senate chosen by the Senate Minority Floor Leader.

6 ➔Section 3. The task force shall meet at least three times during the 2022 Interim  
7 and shall submit its findings, legislative recommendations, or a memorandum to the  
8 Legislative Research Commission no later than December 1, 2022. If legislative  
9 recommendations are submitted, the Legislative Research Commission may refer the  
10 recommendations to the appropriate committee or committees of jurisdiction in advance  
11 of the 2023 Regular Session of the Kentucky General Assembly.

12 ➔Section 4. Provisions of this Resolution to the contrary notwithstanding, the  
13 Legislative Research Commission shall have the authority to alternatively assign the  
14 issues identified herein to an interim joint committee or subcommittee thereof and to  
15 designate a study completion date.