

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 nurses and to project future
8 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 around 55 new primary care physicians each year and recruits another 55 or
26 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 rural and inner-city areas;
- 25 (2) Identify strategies to reverse the growing shortage of healthcare workers, especially
26 in rural and inner-city 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 potential changes in curriculums and ways to expand the use of
8 technology to prepare the type of competently trained graduates required by
9 employers;
- 10 (7) Identify best practice retention models within the employment environment;
- 11 (8) Identify strategies to ensure that governmental payors and private insurers
12 adequately cover labor costs;
- 13 (9) Identify the roles and responsibilities of private and public organizations in
14 addressing healthcare workforce shortage issues; and
- 15 (10) Gather information on work completed by other groups, states, and the federal
16 government related to the healthcare workforce shortage.

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

- 20 (1) Three members of the House of Representatives chosen by the Speaker of the
21 House of Representatives, one of whom shall be designated as co-chair;
- 22 (2) One member of the House of Representatives chosen by the House Minority Floor
23 Leader;
- 24 (3) Three members of the Senate chosen by the President of the Senate, one of whom
25 shall be designated as co-chair; and
- 26 (4) One member of the Senate chosen by the Senate Minority Floor Leader.

27 ➔Section 3. The task force shall meet at least three times during the 2022 Interim

1 and shall submit its findings, legislative recommendations, or a memorandum to the
2 Legislative Research Commission no later than December 1, 2022. If legislative
3 recommendations are submitted, the Legislative Research Commission may refer the
4 recommendations to the appropriate committee or committees of jurisdiction in advance
5 of the 2023 Regular Session of the Kentucky General Assembly.

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