

STATE OF NEW YORK

10374

IN ASSEMBLY

March 3, 2026

Introduced by M. of A. LUNSFORD -- read once and referred to the Committee on Health

AN ACT to amend the public health law, in relation to establishing the hospice workforce stabilization and innovation program; and making an appropriation therefor

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. Short Title. This act shall be known and may be cited as
2 the "Hospice Workforce Stabilization and Innovation Act".

3 § 2. Legislative Findings and Purpose. The legislature finds that
4 hospice and palliative care services are essential components of New
5 York's health care delivery system and play a critical role in improving
6 quality of life, supporting families and caregivers, and reducing avoid-
7 able hospitalizations. The legislature further finds that New York State
8 faces a significant shortage of hospice nurses, aides, social workers,
9 chaplains, and other interdisciplinary staff, resulting in reduced
10 access to hospice services, delayed referrals, provider strain, and
11 inequities in the availability of high-quality end-of-life care, partic-
12 ularly in rural and underserved communities.

13 The legislature additionally finds that hospice providers licensed
14 under article forty of the public health law have been excluded from
15 major statewide workforce initiatives, insofar as those initiatives have
16 relied on Medicaid funding, and hospice providers are primarily reim-
17 bursed by Medicare rather than Medicaid. This has contributed to work-
18 force instability and undermined the State's ability to improve hospice
19 utilization and access. The purpose of this act is to establish a coor-
20 dinated, statewide investment to stabilize the hospice workforce,
21 strengthen long-term training pipelines, and expand workforce education.

22 § 3. The public health law is amended by adding a new section 4013-a
23 to read as follows:

24 § 4013-a. Hospice workforce stabilization and innovation program. 1.

25 (a) "Hospice provider" means any hospice program licensed under this
26 article.

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[-] is old law to be omitted.

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1 (b) "Eligible employee" means any full-time or part-time employee of a
2 hospice provider.

3 (c) "Educational institution" means a school district, board of coop-
4 erative educational services, community college, university, or other
5 accredited educational entity approved by the department.

6 2. (a) The department shall administer a hospice workforce retention
7 and training grant program.

8 (b) The program shall be funded annually and no less than ten million
9 dollars.

10 (c) Grants shall be allocated on a per-full-time-equivalent basis, or
11 via such other equitable methodology as shall be determined by the
12 commissioner after consultation with all affected parties.

13 (d) Grant funds may be used for staff retention incentives, continuing
14 education, professional certification including board certification in
15 hospice and palliative care, workforce wellness initiatives, and other
16 workforce support activities approved by the department.

17 (e) In allocating grant funds, the department shall prioritize hospice
18 providers that demonstrate financial strain or serve rural, medically
19 underserved, or high-need communities.

20 3. (a) The department shall establish regional hospice workforce pipe-
21 line programs.

22 (b) Such programs shall be funded at five million dollars annually.

23 (c) Grants may be awarded to hospices or educational institutions, in
24 partnership with one or more hospice providers, to expand training
25 aligned with hospice-specific competencies, including home health aide
26 certification, licensed practical nurse training, and registered nurse
27 advancement.

28 (d) Grant funds may be used for recruitment and outreach, tuition
29 subsidies, faculty support, and paid hospice orientation and training
30 programs of up to six months.

31 4. (a) The department, in consultation with the state education
32 department, shall establish a public education collaborative to support
33 outreach and education regarding hospice and palliative care within the
34 New York state public education system.

35 (b) Awards may be made to educational institutions partnering with
36 local hospice providers to support age-appropriate education, career
37 awareness, and general awareness of hospice and palliative care.

38 5. (a) The department may promulgate regulations necessary to imple-
39 ment this section.

40 (b) The department shall submit an annual report to the governor and
41 the legislature detailing program expenditures, participation, outcomes,
42 and recommendations.

43 § 4. The sum of fifteen million dollars (\$15,000,000), or so much
44 thereof as may be necessary, is hereby appropriated to the department of
45 health out of any moneys in the state treasury in the general fund to
46 the credit of the hospice workforce stabilization and innovation
47 program, not otherwise appropriated, and made immediately available, for
48 the purpose of carrying out the provisions of this act. Such moneys
49 shall be payable on the audit and warrant of the comptroller on vouchers
50 certified or approved by the commissioner of health in the manner
51 prescribed by law.

52 § 5. Severability clause. If any clause, sentence, paragraph, subdivi-
53 sion, section or part of this act shall be adjudged by any court of
54 competent jurisdiction to be invalid, such judgment shall not affect,
55 impair, or invalidate the remainder thereof, but shall be confined in
56 its operation to the clause, sentence, paragraph, subdivision, section

1 or part thereof directly involved in the controversy in which such judg-
2 ment shall have been rendered. It is hereby declared to be the intent of
3 the legislature that this act would have been enacted even if such
4 invalid provisions had not been included herein.

5 § 6. This act shall take effect on the first of April next succeeding
6 the date on which it shall have become a law.