STATE OF NEW YORK

9542

IN SENATE

March 23, 2026

Introduced by Sen. CLEARE -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Finance

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:

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

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

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

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

§ 4013-a. Hospice workforce stabilization and innovation program. 1. (a) "Hospice provider" means any hospice program licensed under this article.

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

LBD14725-02-6

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

(c) "Educational institution" means a school district, board of cooperative educational services, community college, university, or other accredited educational entity approved by the department.

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

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

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

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

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

3. (a) The department shall establish regional hospice workforce pipeline programs.

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

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

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

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

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

5. (a) The department may promulgate regulations necessary to implement this section.

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

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

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

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

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