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PRESS RELEASE

$169K to Fund Health Care Capacity Building and Training Planning Across Massachusetts

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development

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Building off the planning teams that developed strategic job growth blueprints for seven regions across the Commonwealth, the Baker-Polito Administration today announced a first phase of grants, totaling almost $169,000, which will ultimately lead to increased healthcare training capacity based on regional needs. The planning grants align to the Governor's Healthcare Collaborative recommendations to grow the direct care, nursing and behavioral health workforce pipelines.

These planning grants will fund the design of programs for targeted healthcare occupations and build capacity around those programs over the next three to six months. They will allow each consortium to coordinate with employers in their region to understand how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected them, develop common goals around which positions are most in demand, address gaps in training for traditionally underserved populations, assist transitions to online or hybrid training models, examine licensing requirements, and more.

The Senator Kenneth J. Donnelly Workforce Success Grants in this round of funding are awarded to:

- Berkshire Healthcare Hub, led by the MassHire Berkshire Workforce Board - $25,000
- Pioneer Valley Healthcare Collaborative Hub, led by the MassHire Hampden County Workforce Board in partnership with the MassHire Franklin/Hampshire Workforce Board - $25,000
- Central Massachusetts Healthcare Workforce Consortium, led by the MassHire Central Region Workforce Board in partnership with the MassHire North Central Workforce Board - $24,989.87
- Northeast HealthCare HUB Workforce Consortium, led by the MassHire North Shore WB in partnership with the MassHire Greater Lowell Workforce Board and the MassHire Merrimack Valley Workforce Board - $25,000
- Greater Boston Healthcare Consortium, led by the Boston Private Industry Council in partnership with the MassHire Metro North Workforce Board and the MassHire Metro South/West Workforce Board - $25,000
- Southeast Consortium, led by the MassHire Greater New Bedford Workforce Board in partnership with the MassHire Bristol Workforce Board, the MassHire Greater Brockton Workforce Board, and the MassHire South Shore Workforce Board - $19,800
- Cape & Islands Regional Healthcare Initiative, led by the MassHire Cape & Islands Workforce Board - $24,185

“Long before the coronavirus emergency, our administration has been and continues to address the shortage of 44,000 healthcare workers that Massachusetts is projected to have by 2024,” said Gov. Charlie Baker. “These regional efforts, working in parallel with our state-level Healthcare Collaborative, will ensure that we take a smart, strategic approach to building a healthcare workforce that meets the specific needs of each corner of the Commonwealth.”

In January 2019, Governor Baker established the Healthcare Collaborative, a convening group uniting healthcare leaders across government, educational institutions, industry, and public organizations. The Collaborative’s objectives are to identify and prioritize talent shortage and demand trends in the Commonwealth, bring transparency to bottlenecks within the healthcare workforce pipeline, and to design and implement a portfolio of solutions to increase the healthcare talent supply for specific occupations to prevent future shortages. The Healthcare Collaborative is co-chaired by Secretary of Labor and Workforce Development Rosalin Acosta and Baystate Health President and CEO Mark Keroack, and includes representatives from 13 healthcare entities and seven educational institutions in Massachusetts.

“With an aging population, new developments in treatment paradigms, and regional disparities with healthcare worker shortages in non-urban areas, these planning efforts are critical to understanding the specific needs of our local communities and healthcare providers,” said Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito. “Only through this kind of collaborative approach can we develop a comprehensive and effective strategy.”

The Baker-Polito Administration launched a new regional planning initiative in April 2017 that brought together regional teams of educators, workforce, and economic development professionals to create regional blueprints for growth strategies in every region of the Commonwealth. The initiative is led by the Governor's Workforce Skills Cabinet, which brings together the Executive Offices of Education, Labor and Workforce Development, and Housing and Economic Development to align state and local programs, policies, and resources to fuel job growth and address employer demand for talent.

"As one of the Commonwealth's largest industries, the healthcare sector is poised for continued evolution as it pivots to adapt to emerging needs in a post-COVID-19 reality while also addressing pre-existing, persistence labor shortages in a range of occupations," said Secretary of Labor and Workforce Development Rosalin Acosta. "Moving the needle will require regional and state-wide coordination to realize the full potential of existing opportunities while also seeding strategic partnerships that foster innovations and alignment among employers, educational institutions, community-based organizations, and the workforce development system."

The Donnelly Workforce Success Grants awarded are funded through the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund (WCTF), which invests in programs that serve people across Massachusetts whose life experiences and circumstances make it difficult for them to succeed in employment without targeted support. The WCTF is administered by Commonwealth Corporation on behalf of the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development.

"We have seen remarkable pivots by many of our grantees after the pandemic struck to continue the work of developing workers' skills, fill critical jobs and help workers advance in their careers," said Commonwealth Corporation CEO and President Christine Abrams. "With these grants, we can support the creation of new programs that directly address the needs of our employers while helping them adapt to the 'new normal' of a post-pandemic economy."

This first phase of funding offered up to $25,000 to each regional team for up to six months of planning and capacity building activities. In the second phase, each regional team can apply for additional funding between $225,000 and $375,000 depending on the geographic size of their region for an additional two-and-a-half years of capacity building and training program implementation.

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EOLWD manages the Commonwealth's workforce development and labor departments to ensure that workers, employers, and the unemployed have the tools and training needed to succeed in the Massachusetts economy.

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