



Senate

General Assembly

File No. 471

January Session, 2023

Substitute Senate Bill No. 1228

Senate, April 6, 2023

The Committee on Public Health reported through SEN. ANWAR of the 3rd Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the Senate, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE'S HEALTH CARE WORKFORCE.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. (*Effective from passage*) The Commissioner of Education, in
2 consultation with the Labor Commissioner and Commissioner of Public
3 Health, shall study the feasibility of establishing an interdistrict magnet
4 school program that provides education and training to students
5 interested in health care professions. The program shall provide
6 pathways for a student to (1) graduate with a certification, license or
7 registration that enables such student to practice in a health care field
8 upon graduation from the program, and (2) complete a curriculum
9 designed to prepare such student for higher education in premedicine
10 or nursing. Not later than February 1, 2024, the Commissioner of
11 Education shall report, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-
12 4a of the general statutes, to the joint standing committee of the General
13 Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to public health
14 regarding the results of such study.

15 Sec. 2. (*Effective from passage*) The Commissioner of Public Health shall

16 study methods to address the shortage of radiologic technologists,
17 nuclear medicine technologists and respiratory care practitioners in the
18 state and develop a plan to address such shortage. Not later than
19 February 1, 2024, the commissioner shall report, in accordance with the
20 provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes, to the joint standing
21 committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters
22 relating to public health regarding the results of such study.

23 Sec. 3. Section 20-126j of the general statutes is repealed and the
24 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2023*):

25 Except as provided in section 20-126k, each applicant for a license to
26 practice dental hygiene shall be examined through written and practical
27 examinations by the Department of Public Health, as to [his] such
28 applicant's professional knowledge and skill before such license is
29 granted. All examinations shall be given at least once per year and at
30 other times prescribed by the department. [Such examination shall be
31 conducted in the English language.] On and after January 1, 2024, such
32 examination shall be offered in both English and Spanish. The
33 Commissioner of Public Health may accept and approve, in lieu of the
34 written examination required in this section, the results of a written
35 examination given by the Joint Commission on National Dental
36 Examinations or comparable national examinations subject to such
37 conditions as said commissioner may prescribe; and said commissioner
38 may accept and approve, in lieu of the practical examination required in
39 this section, the results of practical examinations given by regional
40 testing agencies subject to such conditions as the Department of Public
41 Health may prescribe. Passing scores shall be prescribed by the
42 Department of Public Health. Said department shall grant licenses to
43 such applicants as are qualified.

44 Sec. 4. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2023*) The Commissioner of Public
45 Health shall notify each applicant who is approved to take an
46 examination required for licensure, certification or registration by the
47 Department of Public Health that such applicant may be eligible for
48 testing accommodations pursuant to the federal Americans with

49 Disabilities Act, 42 USC 12101 et seq., as amended from time to time.

50 Sec. 5. (*Effective from passage*) The Commissioner of Public Health shall
51 study the feasibility of offering competency testing for dental assistants,
52 phlebotomists, electrocardiography technicians and respiratory care
53 practitioners in both English and Spanish. Not later than February 1,
54 2024, the commissioner shall report, in accordance with the provisions
55 of section 11-4a of the general statutes, to the joint standing committee
56 of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to public
57 health on such study.

58 Sec. 6. (*Effective from passage*) The Commissioner of Aging and
59 Disability Services, in consultation with the Advisory Board for Persons
60 Who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing or Deafblind, shall conduct a study to
61 evaluate gaps in communication access for deaf, hard of hearing or
62 deafblind persons to medical providers and develop recommendations
63 for improved access. Not later than October 1, 2023, the commissioner
64 shall report, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the
65 general statutes, to the joint standing committees of the General
66 Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to aging, human
67 services and public health on such study.

68 Sec. 7. Subdivision (1) of subsection (c) of section 20-112a of the
69 general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu
70 thereof (*Effective October 1, 2023*):

71 (c) (1) A licensed dentist may delegate to dental assistants such dental
72 procedures as the dentist may deem advisable, including: (A) The taking
73 of dental x-rays if the dental assistant can demonstrate successful
74 completion of the dental radiation health and safety examination
75 administered by the Dental Assisting National Board or a radiation
76 health and safety competency assessment administered by a dental
77 education program in the state that is accredited by the American Dental
78 Association's Commission on Dental Accreditation; (B) the taking of
79 impressions of teeth for study models; and (C) the provision of fluoride
80 varnish treatments. Such procedures shall be performed under the
81 direct supervision of a licensed dentist and the dentist providing direct

82 supervision shall assume responsibility for such procedures.

83 Sec. 8. (*Effective from passage*) On or before January 1, 2025, The
 84 University of Connecticut School of Dental Medicine shall develop a
 85 radiation health and safety competency assessment for dental assistants
 86 that reflects current industry practices regarding the taking of dental x-
 87 rays. Such assessment shall be a suitable competency evaluation, the
 88 successful completion of which would allow a dental assistant to take
 89 dental x-rays under the direct supervision of a licensed dentist pursuant
 90 to the provisions of subdivision (1) of subsection (c) of section 20-112a
 91 of the general statutes, as amended by this act. Not later than January 1,
 92 2025, The University of Connecticut School of Dental Medicine shall
 93 report, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general
 94 statutes, to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly
 95 having cognizance of matters relating to public health regarding the
 96 development of such assessment.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 2	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 3	<i>July 1, 2023</i>	20-126j
Sec. 4	<i>July 1, 2023</i>	New section
Sec. 5	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 6	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 7	<i>October 1, 2023</i>	20-112a(c)(1)
Sec. 8	<i>from passage</i>	New section

Statement of Legislative Commissioners:

In Sections 1, 5, 6 and 8, "in accordance with section 11-4a" was changed to "in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a", for consistency.

PH *Joint Favorable Subst.*

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact:

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 24 \$	FY 25 \$
Aging and Disability Services, Dept.	GF - Cost	10,000	None
Public Health, Dept.	GF - Cost	1,061,000	250,000

Note: GF=General Fund

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

The bill results in a cost to the Department of Public Health (DPH) and the Department of Aging and Disability (ADS) services. The impacts from the bill are broken out by section below. Other provisions of the bill are not anticipated to result in a fiscal impact to the State or municipalities.

Section 2, which requires DPH to study methods to address the shortage of radiologic technologists, nuclear medicine technologists and respiratory care practitioners in Connecticut, develop a plan to address such shortage, and report on this plan by 2/1/24, results in a cost to the agency of approximately \$61,000 in FY 24 for a consultant.¹

Section 3, which requires DPH to provide a dental hygiene written and practical examination in English and Spanish, results in a cost of approximately \$1 million in FY 24 for a consultant to convert the existing English written and practical examination into Spanish.² It is anticipated

¹It is estimated that it will take a Healthcare Strategic Planning consultant three months to complete these requirements at a cost of \$127.39 per hour.

²Licensing exams are proprietary and cannot be translated by a third party, such as the State of Connecticut.

that the development of the examination will take a full fiscal year, and, therefore, that the Spanish dental hygiene examination will be ready beginning in FY 25. Ongoing costs for exam proctoring, statistical item analysis, and scoring are estimated at approximately \$250,000 annually, beginning in FY 25.

Section 6, which requires ADS to conduct a study to evaluate gaps in communication for deaf, hard of hearing or deafblind persons' access to medical providers, results in a cost of \$10,000 in FY 24. To undertake the study, the Department will need to hire a graduate fellow from a Connecticut-based institution in FY 24 to assist with the research, data collection, and drafting of the report on the recommendations.

The Out Years

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact to DPH identified above would continue into the future subject to inflation. The cost to ADS is in FY 24 only.

OLR Bill Analysis**sSB 1228****AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE'S HEALTH CARE WORKFORCE.****SUMMARY**

This bill addresses various issues related to health care credentialing and competency testing, the health care workforce, and related issues. Regarding testing, it:

1. requires the Department of Public Health (DPH) to notify each applicant taking an examination for DPH licensure, certification, or registration that they may be eligible for testing accommodations under the federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA);
2. requires the dental hygienist written and practical licensure examinations to be offered in Spanish as well as English starting in 2024; and
3. provides an alternate way for dental assistants to qualify to take dental x-rays, by passing a competency assessment rather than a national exam, and requires UConn's School of Dental Medicine to develop the assessment by January 1, 2025.

The bill also requires various studies and related reports. Specifically, it requires:

1. the education commissioner, in consultation with the labor and DPH commissioners, to study the feasibility of establishing an interdistrict magnet school program focused on training students for health care professions;

2. the DPH commissioner to study how to address the state's shortage of radiologic technologists, nuclear medicine technologists, and respiratory care practitioners;
3. the DPH commissioner to study the feasibility of offering competency testing in both English and Spanish for dental assistants, phlebotomists, electrocardiography technicians, and respiratory care practitioners; and
4. the aging and disability services commissioner, in consultation with the Advisory Board for Persons Who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing or Deafblind, to evaluate gaps in these individuals' access to communication with medical providers.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage, except (1) July 1, 2023, for the provisions on ADA accommodations and the dental hygienist examination and (2) October 1, 2023, for the provision on dental assistants' eligibility to take dental x-rays after passing the assessment.

§§ 7 & 8 — DENTAL ASSISTANTS

Existing law allows dentists to delegate certain procedures to dental assistants, under the dentist's direct supervision. Under current law, this includes dental x-rays, but only if the assistant has passed the Dental Assisting National Board's dental radiation health and safety exam.

The bill additionally allows dentists to delegate these procedures to dental assistants who have passed a radiation health and safety competency assessment. That assessment must be administered by an in-state dental education program accredited by the American Dental Association's Commission on Dental Accreditation.

By January 1, 2025, the bill requires UConn's School of Dental Medicine to (1) develop this competency assessment, reflecting current industry practices on dental x-rays, and (2) report on its development to the Public Health Committee.

§ 1 — INTERDISTRICT MAGNET SCHOOL STUDY

The bill requires the education commissioner, in consultation with the labor and DPH commissioners, to study the feasibility of creating an interdistrict magnet school program to educate and train students interested in health care professions. This must include pathways for students to (1) graduate with a certification, license, or registration allowing them to practice in a health care field and (2) complete a curriculum designed to prepare them for pre-medicine or nursing higher education programs.

By February 1, 2024, the education commissioner must report on the study to the Public Health Committee.

§ 2 — PROVIDER SHORTAGE STUDY

The bill requires the DPH commissioner to study the shortage of radiologic technologists, nuclear medicine technologists, and respiratory care practitioners in the state, and develop a plan to address it. By February 1, 2024, she must report on the study's results to the Public Health Committee.

§ 5 — SPANISH LANGUAGE TESTING STUDY

The bill requires the DPH commissioner to study the feasibility of offering competency testing in both Spanish and English for dental assistants, phlebotomists, electrocardiography technicians, and respiratory care practitioners. By February 1, 2024, she must report on the study to the Public Health Committee.

§ 6 — COMMUNICATION ACCESS STUDY

The bill requires the aging and disability services commissioner, in consultation with the Advisory Board for Persons Who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing or Deafblind, to (1) conduct a study evaluating gaps in these individuals' access to communication with medical providers and (2) develop recommendations to improve this access. By October 1, 2023, she must report on the study to the Aging, Human Services, and Public Health committees.

BACKGROUND

Related Bill

sSB 9, reported favorably by the Public Health Committee, (1) requires the education commissioner to establish a Health Care Career Advisory Council to advise on developing a health career program, including promoting these career options to, and giving shadowing and internship opportunities for, students (§ 9), and (2) requires DPH to offer nurse’s aide competency tests in both Spanish and English (§ 13).

COMMITTEE ACTION

Public Health Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 37 Nay 0 (03/27/2023)