

RECOMMENDATION #8

Optimize payment for health care services to support nursing care

Optimizing payment for health care services such as school health, primary care, long-term care, and public health is crucial to supporting the nursing workforce and ensuring the delivery of high-quality care. This optimization is important for several reasons:

- **Attracting and Retaining Nursing Talent** - Competitive compensation is essential for attracting and retaining skilled nurses. Adequate payment structures reflect the value and importance of nursing services, encouraging professionals to enter and remain in the field. This is particularly vital in settings outside of acute care, where the demand for nursing services is high but the pay has traditionally been lower.
- **Supporting Expanded Roles** - Nurses increasingly take on expanded roles in health care delivery, including preventive care, chronic disease management, and community health initiatives. Optimizing payment for services in primary care, school health, and public health acknowledges these expanded roles and provides the necessary resources for nurses to effectively contribute to these areas.
- **Improving Access to Care** - Adequate payment for health care services can help health care facilities, including long-term care and school health programs, staff their operations sufficiently with qualified nurses. This directly impacts patient access to care, ensuring that individuals receive timely and appropriate services, which is especially important in underserved and rural areas.
- **Facilitating Professional Development** - Optimal payment structures can provide resources for ongoing professional development and education for nurses. This is essential for keeping the nursing workforce up to date with the latest health care practices and technologies.

Adequate payment for health care services across various settings is essential for supporting the nursing workforce. The employment of nurses is an important component of how payments for services are allocated, directly affecting competitive compensation and staffing priorities, retention of skilled and experienced nurses, and ultimately access to quality of care for patients. The Task Force on the Future of the Nursing Workforce recommends the following strategies for optimizing payment for health care services to support nursing care:

Strategy 22 – Increase funding to support school nursing (Page 119)

Strategy 23 – Use funding mechanisms to support the long-term care nursing workforce (Page 122)

Strategy 24 – Promote RN billing in primary care (Page 124)

Strategy 25 – Expand the state budget in key shortage areas for nursing care (Page 127)