

House Bill 652

By: Representatives Dodson of the 94th, West of the 101st, Hudson of the 156th, Shaw of the 176th, Unterman of the 84th and others

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To provide for a short title and legislative findings and intent; to amend Chapter 1 of Title
2 43 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to professions and businesses, so as
3 to authorize certain surveys of licensees and the reporting of licensee data to the Department
4 of Community Health; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

6 **SECTION 1.**

7 This Act shall be known and may be cited as the "Health Care Work Force Shortage Act."

8 **SECTION 2.**

9 The General Assembly finds there currently exists a severe health care personnel shortage
10 as evidenced by a 13 percent vacancy rate of registered nurses in Georgia, along with a
11 shortage of almost 1,200 allied health personnel; a decline in enrollment in nursing programs
12 of 20.9 percent from 1995 to 1998; hospital budgets being severely impacted by overtime
13 and temporary agency staff; an increase in chronic illnesses in Georgia's aging population
14 contributing to expanded use of health care services; an increase in the average age of
15 registered nurses to approximately 45 years old; a greater need for experienced allied health
16 personnel and nurses in specialty areas to meet the more acute care needs of hospital patients;
17 an expansion of the nursing role into other settings such as home health, managed care, and
18 school nursing; active marketing for and recruitment of U.S. nurses by Canadian hospitals;
19 an increase in the average age of health care teaching faculty; and fewer students pursuing
20 a career in teaching health professional courses. The General Assembly further finds that
21 some data already exist regarding the number of such personnel currently licensed, the
22 number of educational programs for training such professionals and the enrollment capacity
23 of those programs, and the number of those personnel who are needed to staff adequately the
24 state's health care facilities. There is, however, no single entity which has access to all of
25 this data and which can, using such data, suggest the measures needed to coordinate the

1 supply with the demand for health care providers into comprehensive short-range and
 2 long-range health care personnel policies and to take those legislative initiatives to ensure
 3 such coordination. As a result, the General Assembly finds that it is necessary to enact a
 4 "Health Care Work Force Shortage Act."

5 SECTION 3.

6 Chapter 1 of Title 43 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to professions and
 7 businesses, is amended by striking Code Section 43-1-25, relating to the authority of
 8 professional licensing boards, and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

9 "43-1-25.

10 Except as provided in subsection (o) of Code Section 43-1-19, Code Sections 43-1-16
 11 through 43-1-24 shall apply to all professional licensing boards and licenses thereunder,
 12 except the Georgia Real Estate Commission and its licensees, notwithstanding any other
 13 law to the contrary, ~~and each.~~ Each such professional licensing board may:

14 (1) Promulgate ~~promulgate~~ rules and regulations to implement the authority provided by
 15 the applicability of said provisions to said boards; and

16 (2) Be authorized to require licensees to complete a license survey at the time of renewal,
 17 requesting information including, but not limited to, workplace settings, current practice
 18 by specialty, and geographical location. Such survey information from licensees who are
 19 licensed or certified under Chapter 7A, Chapter 10A, Chapter 11, Chapter 11A, Chapter
 20 26, Chapter 28, Chapter 33, Chapter 34, Chapter 39, and Chapter 44 of this title and
 21 under Chapter 4 of Title 26 shall be provided to the Department of Community Health
 22 upon its request for the purpose of analyzing the supply and demand of health care
 23 personnel. Individual data contained in the survey shall not be subject to Article 4 of
 24 Chapter 18 of Title 50, relating to the inspection of public records."

25 SECTION 4.

26 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.