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**SENATE BILL 5537**

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**State of Washington 68th Legislature 2023 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Cleveland, Rivers, Dhingra, Mullet, Muzzall, Hunt, Wellman, and C. Wilson

AN ACT Relating to establishing the Washington state hospital patient care unit staffing innovation collaborative; adding a new section to chapter 43.70 RCW; creating a new section; and providing an expiration date.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The legislature recognizes there is a persistent health care workforce shortage in Washington state and across the country and that, in order to protect patient access to care amid a workforce shortage, hospitals must find new ways to deliver care while easing burdens on patient care unit staff. The legislature further recognizes that innovative hospital patient care unit staffing and care delivery models should be thoughtfully considered and disseminated across Washington state. Therefore, it is the intent of the legislature to establish a collaborative for the advancement of hospital patient care unit staffing and care delivery innovations to provide guidance, research, and recommendations for the benefit of those providing care in hospitals.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 43.70 RCW to read as follows:

(1) The Washington state hospital patient care unit staffing innovation collaborative is established for the purpose of enhancing the understanding of innovative hospital staffing and care delivery models, such as those that integrate on-site team-based care delivery, use of patient monitoring equipment and technology, and virtual or remote care delivery.

(2) The department shall contract with the center to facilitate and provide staff support to the collaborative.

(3) By December 1, 2023, the collaborative shall be convened. The collaborative shall select two cochairs from among its members and shall consist of the following members, who shall be appointed or requested by the department, unless otherwise noted:

(a) Four representatives of small, medium, and large hospitals, urban and rural hospitals, and public and private hospitals from regions across the state, to be selected by the Washington state hospital association;

(b) Four representatives of hospital patient care unit staff working in small, medium, and large hospitals, urban and rural hospitals, and public and private hospitals from regions across the state, to be selected by the Washington state nurses association, SEIU Healthcare 1199NW, and UFCW 21;

(c) One member representing a master of health administration program in Washington state;

(d) One member representing a master of nursing program in Washington state;

(e) One member representing patients who have been hospitalized within the last 12 months;

(f) One member representing physicians practicing in hospitals selected by the Washington state medical association; and

(g) One member who is an expert in the use of technology for patient care delivery in hospitals.

(4) By December 1, 2023, the Washington state hospital association shall survey hospitals in Washington state and report to the center on Washington hospitals' existing use of innovative hospital staffing and care delivery models, including but not limited to integration of patient monitoring equipment, remote patient monitoring, team-based care models, apprenticeship and career ladder programs, and virtual or remote care delivery models and any challenges with implementing the models.

(5) By December 1, 2024, the center shall review innovative hospital staffing and care delivery models explored by national organizations analyzing hospital staffing and care delivery innovations.

(6) The collaborative shall, based on information provided under subsections (4) and (5) of this section:

(a) Identify and analyze innovative hospital staffing and care delivery models;

(b) Evaluate feasibility of broad-based implementation of identified innovative hospital staffing and care delivery models;

(c) Select which innovative hospital staffing and care delivery models should be disseminated across the state; and

(d) Explore and make recommendations on whether to create a technical assistance center to support hospitals in implementing or expanding innovative hospital staffing and care delivery models.

(7) The collaborative shall inform the relevant professional associations, labor organizations, governing boards or commissions, and the appropriate policy and fiscal committees of the legislature of any recommendations for broader dissemination of innovative hospital staffing models or pilot projects identified for implementation by no later than December 1, 2025, December 1, 2026, and December 1, 2027.

(8) For purposes of this section:

(a) "Center" means the center for health workforce studies at the University of Washington.

(b) "Department" means the department of health.

(c) "Hospital" has the same meaning as defined in RCW 70.41.020.

(d) "Patient care unit" has the same meaning as defined in RCW 70.41.410.

(9) This section expires December 31, 2027.

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