

## ***Fast Track Healthcare Apprenticeships Act***

**Background:** The Department of Labor’s (DOL) Healthcare Apprenticeships include programs for medical assistants, dental assistants, pharmacy technicians, surgical technologists, paramedics, behavioral health paraprofessionals and registered nurses, among other health care professions. These providers are essential to delivering high quality health care to patients across the country. The American Hospital Association expects a shortage of about 100,000 critical health care workers by 2028. It is clear that there is a need to increase the supply of health professionals to keep up with the health care needs of the country.

Apprenticeship programs, traditionally designed for trades like construction, plumbing, and electrical work, is a model that has proven successful in building a skilled workforce for technical fields. In healthcare, apprenticeships can be similarly valuable. They offer a pathway for people to gain critical clinical skills and knowledge while working in real-world settings. Providing alternative pathways to enter the healthcare industry is a critical part of closing these gaps in the workforce. There is an opportunity here for Congress to support and incentivize these innovative approaches to address the health care workforce shortage.

**Solution:** The Healthcare Apprenticeship Modernization Act amends the National Apprenticeship Act to streamline and update federal *and* state labor agencies’ healthcare apprenticeship application process by:

- Requiring federal and state labor agencies to make determinations on health care apprenticeship applications within 45 days of receipt.
- Requiring that DOL digitize apprenticeship agreement forms, modernize the application process and enhance accessibility for applicants.

This will expedite the creation of new apprenticeship programs in health care fields, addressing the pressing workforce shortages nationwide. It also allows employers the ability to revise their application and reapply after a rejection, without facing lengthy delays.

By updating and accelerating the review process, this legislation seeks to make it easier for employers to train aspiring health care professionals entering the workforce. This initiative will enable labor agencies to actively contribute to the solutions for health care labor shortages, supporting the sector's resilience and long-term sustainability.

**Endorsers:** Service Employees International Union (SEIU), Hospital Association of Oregon