

**SB**

**8**

**Senator Hollis French**

Capitol Room 504  
465-3892  
465-6595 fax



**MEMORANDUM**

Date: January 10, 2006

To: Senator Fred Dyson, Chair  
HESS Committee

From: Senator Hollis French (HFR)

RE: Request for Hearing -- SB 8 - "An Act relating to a student loan repayment program for nurses, and amending the duties of the Board of Nursing that relate to this program; and providing for an effective date."

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This is a request that you schedule a hearing on SB 8 - "An Act relating to a student loan repayment program for nurses, and amending the duties of the Board of Nursing that relate to this program; and providing for an effective date" at the earliest possible date.

I have attached a copy of the bill, a sponsor statement, and a sectional analysis for your use. Additional materials will be made available to your committee aide prior to the hearing.

Attachments

# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

SENATOR HOLLIS FRENCH

## SPONSOR STATEMENT – SB 8

### Alaska Nurse Recruitment Loan Repayment Program

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Alaska is suffering from a severe shortage of nurses, and Alaskans' health care is suffering because of that shortage. SB 8, which establishes the Alaska Nurse Recruitment Loan Repayment Program, could help to change that. Offering financial incentives to nurses working in Alaska will help attract new nurses to the state and encourage Alaskans to pursue their nursing vocations here at home.

In 2002, the Alaska Colleagues in Caring, in collaboration with the Alaska Hospital and Nursing Home Association, surveyed facilities in Alaska regarding nursing workforce needs. Results showed that vacancy rates for RNs had increased from 5.7% in 2000 to 11.5% in 2002, with increasing vacancy rates projected into the future. Facilities in western and northern Alaska reported a vacancy rate of over 20% and, according to information from other sources, the vacancy rate in some remote areas of Alaska is as high as 35 percent.

The Alaska Nurse Recruitment Loan Repayment Program will provide repayment of up to \$10,000, over five years, of educational loans an individual has accumulated while training to become a nurse. To qualify for loan reimbursement, an individual must be hired as a nurse in Alaska on or after July 1, 2005, be licensed to practice as a nurse in Alaska, work as a nurse in the state throughout the loan repayment period, and have outstanding educational loans from a recognized lending institution.

Additional eligibility criteria and guidelines for the loan program will be set in regulations adopted by the Board of Nursing, in consultation with the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education. These may include guidelines on establishing priorities for participation in the loan repayment program if funding

for the program is not adequate to meet need. The guidelines may include determinations based on areas of the state and nursing specialties affected by shortages,

Funding for the program may be appropriated from the Student Loan Corporation dividend (the return of contributed capital authorized in AS 14.42.295(a)) or alternate state, federal, or other sources. The executive director of the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education will administer the program.

*Senator Hollis French*  
*January 10, 2006*

# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

SENATOR HOLLIS FRENCH

## SECTIONAL ANALYSIS – SB 8

### ALASKA NURSE RECRUITMENT LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM

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- Section 1:** Findings and purpose.
- Section 2:** Adds responsibility for establishing standards and eligibility criteria for the Alaska Nurse Recruitment Loan Repayment Program, including the adoption of necessary regulations and determination of areas of the state and specialties that have a shortage of nurses, to the Alaska Board of Nursing, in consultation with the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education.
- Section 3:** Adds responsibility to perform duties relating to the Alaska Nurse Recruitment Loan Repayment Program to the list of responsibilities of the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education (ACPE).
- Section 4:** Directs the executive director of ACPE to administer the Alaska Nurse Recruitment Loan Repayment Program.
- Section 5:** Establishes that the money made available to the state from the dividend of the Student Loan Corporation may be appropriated for the Alaska Nurse Recruitment Loan Repayment Program.
- Section 6:** Establishes the Alaska Nurse Recruitment Loan Repayment Program.

Sec. 14.43.530 – Establishes the loan repayment program to provide financial incentives for qualified registered nurses to work in the state through the repayment of education loans.

Sec. 14.43.540 – Establishes the Alaska Nurse Recruitment Loan Repayment Program account in the general fund. The account shall be used to provide financial awards for the repayment of education loans and to pay for the costs of administering the program. The account includes money appropriated by the

- more -

legislature from the dividend paid to the state by the Alaska Student Loan Corporation or other sources.

Sec. 14.43.550 – Establishes that the Alaska Nurse Recruitment Loan Repayment Program shall be administered by the executive director of the ACPE using standards and eligibility criteria established by the Board of Nursing and financial management standards established by the commission. Gives the commission authority to adopt regulations to carry out the duties involved with administering the program, after consultation with the Board of Nursing.

Sec. 14.43.560 – Establishes these eligibility criteria:

- Applicant was hired as a nurse in Alaska on or after July 1, 2005.
- Applicant is employed as a nurse in Alaska during the loan repayment period.
- Applicant is licensed to practice as a nurse in Alaska.
- Applicant must agree to fulfill any requirement of the program.
- Applicant must have outstanding education loans from a recognized lending institution..

Sec. 14.43.570 – Establishes conditions and limitations on loan payments. The total repayment amount to any individual is limited to \$10,000. An annual loan repayment to an individual may be the lesser of \$2,000 or 20 percent of the total loan and interest owed by the person.

Financial awards under the program will be conditioned on the availability of funds. If adequate funds are not available to meet all needs, the executive director of ACPE may prorate available funds and suspend the acceptance of new applications or award funds available for new or pending applicants according to criteria approved by the Board of Nursing.

A loan is not eligible for repayment under the program if it is eligible for repayment or forgiveness under any other program

Sec. 14.43.590 – Definitions of terms.

**Section 7:** Allows the Board of Nursing and ACPE to adopt necessary regulations immediately upon passage of the Act.

**Section 8:** Establishes an immediate effective date for Section 7.

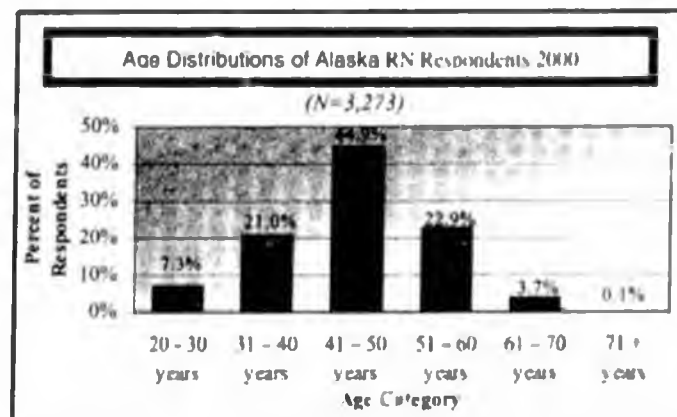
**Section 9:** Establishes an effective date of July 1, 2005, for the remainder of the Act.



### Background On the Nursing Shortage in Alaska

There are currently about 5,200 RNs living in Alaska. Since the late 1990's there has been an increasing shortage of Registered Nurses in Alaska and the US as a whole. This has led to an 11.5% vacancy rate for nursing positions in the State. Contributing factors for this shortage include:

- The aging of the workforce. In 2000 the average age of a RN in Alaska 45.1 years compared to 43.3 years nationally. 72% of the RNs in Alaska are over the age of 40 years old. Data from the 2002 license renewal is currently being evaluated, but it is expected that the average age has only increased.<sup>1</sup>



- Hospital and nursing home nursing is very physically demanding. Because of this most nurses working in these settings retire in their 50s. Nationally it is projected that half the nursing workforce will retire in the next five years.
- Fewer young people have gone into the profession. This is graphically illustrated by the above figure.<sup>1</sup> Formerly, the two primary occupations available to women were teaching and nursing. Now there are a larger number of options available. Many women who previously would have become nurses are now becoming doctors.
- Increased complexity of patient care. In order to reduce health care costs more procedures are being done on an outpatient basis, and hospital stays have been shortened. This means that the patients in hospitals are much sicker than 15 years ago, requiring more skilled care.
- In order to reduce costs, hospitals in the 90's increased the number of patients nurses were required to care for at the same time that the patients became sicker. This lead many nurses to leave the workforce because of concern about patient and nurse safety.



- A decrease in job satisfaction, as inadequate staffing is preventing RNs from providing high quality care to patients. One of the single most important factors in nurses being satisfied with their working conditions is the RN having ample time to provide quality care to their patients. This is usually directly tied the number and the acuity of the patients they are required to care for.
- Increased work-acquired injury and illness. This is addressed in detail elsewhere, but between the increased number of HIV and hepatitis infected patients and the increased weight of the population, many nurses have suffered career ending injuries or illnesses. It is not unusual for nurses to be asked to care for 300-500 lb patients.

### **Importance of RNs to Patient Health and Safety**

The nursing shortage effects patient care in two main ways. Studies tie RNs to positive patient outcomes and poor staffing causes experienced RNs to leave the profession due to job dissatisfaction.

- A 2000 study<sup>111</sup> looked at hospital and Medicare data from hospitals in nine states in five categories of adverse outcomes: length of hospital stay, pneumonia contracted in the hospital, postoperative infection, bed sores, and urinary tract infections contracted while in the hospital. All five measures are markedly decreased with higher levels of RN involvement in patient care.
- A study published in the October 2002 Journal of the American Medical Association<sup>112</sup>, found the risk of patient mortality increased by 7% for every additional patient in the average nurse's workload in the hospital;
- The study suggests that RNs contribute importantly to surveillance, early detection, and timely interventions that save lives;
- The benefits of improved RN staffing also extend to larger numbers of hospitalized patients who are not at risk for mortality but nevertheless are vulnerable to a wide range of unfavorable outcomes;
- Higher emotional exhaustion and greater job dissatisfaction in nurses were strongly and significantly associated with patient-to-nurse ratios;
- Improving nurse staffing levels may reduce alarming turnover rates in hospitals by reducing burnout and job dissatisfaction, major precursors of job resignation;
- Improving staffing may not only save patient lives and decrease nurse turnover but also reduce hospital costs, if recently published estimates of the costs of replacing a hospital medical and surgical general unit and a specialty nurse (\$42,000 to \$64,000) are correct



### **Health and Safety Issues Related to the Nursing Shortage**

Health care is rapidly becoming the most hazardous industry in America, as well as Alaska. RNs report that health and safety concerns play a major role in their decisions to remain in the profession. Nurses and other health care workers are exposed to the following hazards:

- Biological hazards: HIV, hepatitis B and C and more than 20 other infectious agents have caused infections in nurses caring for patients with these infections.
- Ergonomic Injuries – Ergonomics hazards of manual lifting and transfer of patients cause back injuries to over 1/3 of all nurses. Nurses are more prone to back injuries than construction laborer, truck loader, or warehouse worker.<sup>v</sup> Nurses accounted for more than 10% of the total for all occupations combined for neck, back and muscle injuries.<sup>vi</sup>
- Chemical hazards: latex allergy and disinfectants cause occupational asthma, and laser smoke, exposure to carcinogenic chemotherapeutic agents result in illness.

### **The Shortage Will Grow**

Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development<sup>vii</sup> provided the below statistics related to the current and growing nursing shortage.

- Employment demand for RNs is projected to grow nearly 40% between 1998 – 2008, faster than the all-occupational average (16.6%)
- The number of RNs needed to fill the new jobs resulting from industry growth will increase by nearly 1,600.
- If 2008 projections hold true, RNs will be the largest single healthcare occupation and the seventh largest occupation in the state.
- Nursing shortage is nationwide and Alaska must compete for RNs, or grow more of our own, to keep up with demand caused by the aging of society, as well as the aging of the RNs.

### **Alaska Nursing Employer Survey Results<sup>viii</sup>**

In 2002, the Alaska Colleagues in Caring, in collaboration with the Alaska Hospital and Nursing Home Association, surveyed facilities in Alaska regarding their nursing workforce needs.

- Vacancy rates for RNs increased on average from 5.7% in 2000 to 11.5% in 2002 with the West and North respondents reporting a 20.8% vacancy rate in 2002.



- Rate of Turnover reported for RNs in 2002 was 24% indicating difficulties with retaining RNs
- Employers identified the most successful retention incentives included
  - Decreased workload and greater scheduling choices
  - Educational Options
  - Management education and involvement
  - Positive work environment
- The percentage of facilities that actively recruit RNs from other states increased from 47.6% of facilities in 2000 to 83.3% of facilities in 2002.
- Employers identified the following anticipated changes in demand for nurses in the next two years
  1. Aging population/increased number of nurses retiring
  2. Increase in medical services used and number of patients
  3. Increased need for nurses, especially RNs
  4. Possible closure of facilities
  5. New facilities built/facility expansion
  6. An increased difficulty in recruiting and retaining nurses

### **Current Nursing Education in Alaska**

The University of Alaska is the primary educator of nurses in the state. Weber State has had a small LPN program in the state for many years, but they will soon be leaving the state. Nursing education is very expensive to provide due to the cost of labs and clinical rotations. This cost is why there are not more providers of nursing education, and why nationally there has been a decrease in nursing education programs.

### **Current RN Programs Provided by UAA (110 RN graduates per year)**

- 2 year RN – Anchorage 32 students admitted per year; Fairbanks 16 students, Kodiak 9 students (every 2 years)
- 4 year RN – Anchorage 80 students admitted per year, with an additional 40 being added this summer
- 1 year LPN – Anchorage 16 students admitted per year, Bethel 7, Fairbanks 8 (rotates), Ketchikan 6 (rotates)

### **Projected Locations and Numbers of Nursing Students 2006 (220 RN graduates per year)**

- 2 year RN – Anchorage 32 students admitted per year, Fairbanks 16, and about 40 students admitted per year in Juneau, Bethel, Kodiak, Kenai, Ketchikan, or Sitka on a rotating basis. Other sites are also being investigated.
- 4 year RN – Anchorage 120 students admitted per year.



### **Articulation Programs**

The University already has an RN to BSN program in place that can be completed through distance learning. UAA is in the process of refining the LPN to RN program to make mobility within the profession easier.

### **Current Demand for Nursing Education Exceeds Slots**

The UAA four-year BSN program has only a minimal waiting list, which should be eliminated with this year's planned expansion. This year the 2-year (AAS) RN program had 2 applicants for every position. Initial interest meetings in expansion sites such as Kenai have shown a tremendous interest from persons in the community.



## SOLUTIONS

The Alaska Nurses Association suggests the following solutions to the Alaska nursing shortage, which come under three main categories:

- Recruitment and education of new RNs
- Retention of experienced RNs
- Adapting the work environment to prolong the careers of aging RNs

### RECRUITMENT AND EDUCATION

- State funding support of UAA and Industry Consortium's effort to double the number of RN graduates by 2006. This requires the State to match the industries commitment of 2.4 million over the next three years.
- Continue Federal funding of the Recruitment and Retention of Alaska Natives into Nursing (RRANN Program) at UAA.
- Support legislation for tuition loan reimbursement of nurses who work in Alaska. Currently several legislators are working to draft such legislation.
- Support an increase to competitive salaries for nursing professors. RNs can currently make more practicing in a hospital than teaching at the University, making the recruitment of qualified instructors very difficult.
- The Alaska Nurses Association is working to develop a recruitment program aimed at grade school children to show them the variety of careers available in the nursing profession.
- The Alaska Nurses Association, hopefully with the support of the Alaska Department of Labor and the University, is planning to work with high schools in developing a pre-nursing preparation program to ensure a successful foundation is created in math and science, especially for rural and non-traditional students.
- With the help of industry, identify and develop training for post-graduate RNs in high-need specialty areas, such as OR and ICU.
- Encourage employers to provide financial incentives for nurses working in facilities to mentor nursing students and new graduates.



## **RETENTION OF EXPERIENCED RNS**

### **Workplace Conditions**

- Support creation and adoption of legislation and/or standards for an appropriate nurse to patient acuity system that creates a safe and satisfying work environment. Several states have passed or are considering similar legislation.
- Create financial incentives for facilities to apply for Nursing Magnet Status with American Nurses Credentialing Center. Magnet status ensures RN participation in workplace design, and promotes quality patient care, highly increasing job satisfaction.
- Encourage employers to make nursing attractive as a long-term career by increasing retirement and medical benefits.
- Encourage Employers to be responsive to RN needs, such as providing daycare that is available during the hours that nurses work and providing flexible scheduling options.
- Create legislation to prohibit mandatory overtime as a staffing solution to the nursing shortage. Other states have successfully passed such legislation.

### **Health and Safety Solutions**

- Provide legislative or administrative incentives for facilities to purchasing latex free products in order to limit latex injuries to RNs and patients, as well as decrease related costs.
- Support the revision and passage of Alaska's existing Needlestick Legislation<sup>18</sup> to meet federal standards, to protect patients and healthcare workers from HIV, Hepatitis, and other infectious diseases.
- Department of Labor's development of Regulations aimed at reducing injuries, and related costs, acquired from lifting and transferring patients in facilities, such as lift teams and assistive devices. Alaska Native Medical Center has had significant success in this area.

## **ADAPTING THE WORK ENVIRONMENT TO PROLONG THE CAREERS OF AGING RNS**

- Encourage institutions to be flexible about working hours and patient loads to allow aging nurses to physically prolong their careers. Many facilities demand 12-hour shifts, which are physically demanding and difficult for aging RNs.
- Fund a study to explore what measures need to be adopted to keep RNs who are over 50 in the workforce.



- Find creative ways to utilize experienced nurses to educate, mentor and recruit new nurses into the profession.

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<sup>i</sup> "Alaska Colleagues in Caring, Alaska Re-Licensure Survey for RNs, 1996, 1998, and 2000", October 2001

<sup>ii</sup> Id.

<sup>iii</sup> ANA's Nurse Staffing and Patient Outcomes in the Inpatient Hospital Setting released in May of 2000.

<sup>iv</sup> "Hospital Nurse Staffing and Patient Mortality, Nurse Burnout, and Job Dissatisfaction," by Linda Aiken, PhD, RN, et. al., is in the October 23/30, 2002, issue of JAMA. The study looked at 232,342 patients between the ages of 20 and 85 who underwent general surgical, orthopedic, or vascular procedures in 168 Pennsylvania hospitals from April 1, 1998 to November 30, 1999.

<sup>v</sup> Labor Department's Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 1998.

<sup>vi</sup> Id.

<sup>vii</sup> Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section (April 9, 2002)

<sup>viii</sup> Alaska Colleagues in Caring Nursing Employer Survey, 1998, 200, & 2002.

<sup>ix</sup> Sec. 18.60.880. Needlestick and sharps injury protections for health care workers.



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January 20, 2006

Honorable Hollis French  
State Capitol  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Senator French:

The Alaska Nurses Association would like to thank you for re-introducing Senate Bill 8 – “an Act relating to a student loan repayment program for nurses.”

Since your work on this issue during the last Session, our office has received numerous telephone inquiries concerning its progress.

As you know, Alaska is facing a nursing shortage with health care facilities reporting an average vacancy rate of eleven percent (11%), with some rural facilities reporting vacancies as high as thirty-five percent (35%).

With the war in Iraq, the threat of bioterrorism, the continued emergence of “new” diseases, such as the ‘bird flu”, the West Nile virus, and SARS, we will need even more nurses in the coming years.

As a state, we have to develop programs to encourage additional qualified individuals to pursue nursing education. One way is to assist them with their educational expenses and to encourage them to remain in the state to practice.

Again, the nurses of Alaska applaud you for your work on this matter.

Sincerely,

Dianne O'Connell, M.Div.  
Executive Director  
Alaska Nurses Association

# FISCAL NOTE

**STATE OF ALASKA**  
**2006 LEGISLATIVE SESSION**

Fiscal Note Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Bill Version: SB8-EED-ACPE-03-03-06  
 ( ) Publish Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Revision Date/Time (Note if correction): \_\_\_\_\_ Dept. Affected: Education  
 Title An Act relating to a student loan repayment program RDU ACPE  
for nurses, and amending the duties of the Board of Nursing that... Component Program Administration & Operations  
 Sponsor Sen. French  
 Requester (S)HES Component No. 2738

**Expenditures/Revenues** (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012
Personal Services	25.0	25.0	25.0	25.0	25.0	25.0
Travel						
Contractual						
Supplies						
Equipment						
Land & Structures						
Grants & Claims						
Miscellaneous	944.0	1,918.0	2,926.0	3,968.0	5,044.0	5,212.0
<b>TOTAL OPERATING</b>	<b>969.0</b>	<b>1,943.0</b>	<b>2,951.0</b>	<b>3,993.0</b>	<b>5,069.0</b>	<b>5,237.0</b>

<b>CAPITAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>65.0</b>					
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<b>CHANGE IN REVENUES ( )</b>						
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**FUND SOURCE** (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF	944.0	1,918.0	2,926.0	3,968.0	5,044.0	5,212.0
1005 GF/Program Receipts						
1037 GF/Mental Health						
1106 Corporate Receipts	90.0	25.0	25.0	25.0	25.0	25.0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,034.0</b>	<b>1,943.0</b>	<b>2,951.0</b>	<b>3,993.0</b>	<b>5,069.0</b>	<b>5,237.0</b>

Estimate of any current year (FY2006) cost: 0.0

Check this box (X) if funding for this bill is included in the Governor's FY 2007 budget proposal:

**POSITIONS**

Full-time						
Part-time	1	1	1	1	1	1
Temporary						

**ANALYSIS:** (Attach a separate page if necessary)

This legislation establishes the Alaska Nurse Recruitment Loan Repayment Program as an incentive tool to attract and retain nurses to work in the state. Eligibility criteria will be set by the Alaska Board of Nursing and administrative criteria will be set by the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education. The Commission executive director is the designated program administrator. Administrative costs are designated above as paid from corporate receipts; the loan benefit costs will be paid from General Funds. While Sec. 6 of the bill contemplates the Legislature may make appropriation to the Fund from the Alaska Student Loan Corporation's annual dividend to the state, that appropriation is not mandated, and the recent dividend amount, if appropriated, would be insufficient to cover costs. The \$65,000 capital expenditure is to create a web-based program management tool. Individual benefits may be paid to the program.

Prepared by: Diane Barrans, Executive Director Phone 465-6740  
 Division: Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education Date/Time 3/3/06 12:00 AM  
 Approved by: Diane Barrans, Executive Director Date 3/3/2006  
 Agency: Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education

**FISCAL NOTE**

**STATE OF ALASKA  
2006 LEGISLATIVE SESSION**

**BILL NO.**

SB008-EED-ACPE-03-03-06

**ANALYSIS CONTINUATION**

participants of up to \$10,000 in exchange for five years of employment in the state as a nurse.

The chart below provides additional details relating to the cost estimates in this fiscal note. Assumptions are:

- \*average individual education loan debt burden of \$16,000 based on borrowing in this field from the Alaska state education loan programs;
- \*starting workforce size of 5,500;
- \*average annual vacancy rate of 9%;
- \*70% of new hires will have qualifying debt, and
- \*workforce growth at a rate of 3% per year.

Growth/Cost Projection Estimates for Alaska Nurse Recruitment Loan Repayment Program  
(Dollar Amounts Shown in Thousands)

Year	# New Hire Nurses	FY					
		FY 2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
2006	472	\$ 944	\$ 944	\$ 944	\$ 944	\$ 944	
2007	487		\$ 974	\$ 974	\$ 974	\$ 974	\$ 974
2008	504			\$1,008	\$1,008	\$1,008	\$1,008
2009	521				\$1,042	\$1,042	\$1,042
2010	538					\$1,076	\$1,076
2011	556						\$1,112
		\$ 944	\$1,918	\$2,926	\$3,968	\$5,044	\$5,212

# **Alaska State Hospital & Nursing Home Association**

*We're helping people care for people!*

RECEIVED  
MAR 06 2006

March 6, 2006

Senator Fred Dyson  
Alaska State Legislature  
State Capitol Building, Room 121  
Juneau AK 99801-1182

Dear Senator Dyson:

The Alaska State Hospital and Nursing Home Association supports SB 8, a student loan repayment program for nurses. The Legislature has been very responsive with increases in the University's budget to increase the nursing program, graduating more than 200 annually. Kenai has 9 students in their second year of an associate program and Homer just began its program.

We ask for your support for this legislation to allow loan forgiveness for nurses wanting to return to Alaska. Even with the improvements Alaska has made to recruit and retain nurses, there is still a huge gap between qualified nurses and the projected need over the next 10-15 years.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,



Linda Fink  
Vice President

426 Main Street, Juneau, Alaska 99801

Phone: 907-586-1790 • Fax: 907-463-7573 • Web: [ashnha.com](http://ashnha.com)

3/6/2006

My name is Donna Phillips and I have been a Registered Nurse for 27 years. The Alaska Nurses Association as well as myself personally would like to speak in support of SB 8. I feel that this is important legislation that will have a positive impact on the nursing shortage that we experience in the State of Alaska. The bill will allow some relief of student loans for new nurses who will work full time in the state. This student loan relief will hopefully impact a nurse's decision to stay in the state of Alaska. I think that new nurses who will work in the private sector don't have the opportunity to access loan relief like nurses working for other types of funded facilities.

I would like to thank the Senate for watching out for the citizens of the State of Alaska by doing what they possibly can to help alleviate the nursing shortage that we experience in Alaska.

Thank you for taking my testimony.  
Donna Phillips, BSN, RN  
Alaska Nurses Association, Board of Directors  
Labor Council, chair  
907-783-2041

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Donna Phillips". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed contact information.