



The Hospital + Healthsystem
Association of Pennsylvania

Leading for Better Health

March 29, 2023

The Honorable Donna Bullock
Chair, Children & Youth Committee
Pennsylvania House of Representatives
P.O. Box 202195
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2195

The Honorable Barry Jozwiak
Minority Chair, Children & Youth Committee
Pennsylvania House of Representatives
P.O. Box 202005
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2005

Dear Chairwoman Bullock and Chairman Jozwiak:

On behalf of our members—approximately 235 acute and specialty hospitals and health systems—The Hospital and Healthsystem Association of Pennsylvania (HAP) is writing to comment on how expanding child care in the commonwealth is crucial to growing the health care workforce needed to care for Pennsylvanians.

As society has evolved, so has the health care workforce. The majority of parents with young children are employed. Ensuring safe, reliable access to childcare and early learning programs has become essential for maintaining and growing the health care workforce. Pennsylvania's hospitals are major employers in the commonwealth and in the aftermath of a national pandemic, remain among the top job creators. In 59 of 67 counties, at least one hospital is among the top ten largest employers and, in 18 counties, a hospital is the largest employer.

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted significant challenges to providing child care for those working in the health care sector. This resulted in additional challenges maintaining the health care workforce necessary to provide care for patients and respond to the pandemic. Hospital staff could not physically be in two places at once: providing care or operations support in hospitals while simultaneously caring for their young children who were at home due to early childcare center closures. Even once childcare centers opened back up, quarantine and isolation restrictions—along with caring for sick family members and navigating the logistics of daycare closures due to staff shortages—kept those parents home.

As we saw early child care providers leaving the field, health care providers followed.

These challenges have persisted and many parents still do not have permanent solutions for addressing these chronic gaps in child care. A [recent HAP survey](#) shows that, across the commonwealth, as many as three in 10 key hospital positions remain vacant despite aggressive efforts to fill them. Among respondents, 14 percent identified unavailable or inadequate child care as a significant barrier to employing staff.

Both the childcare and health care workforce crises have converged to create a perfect storm. Addressing the child care crisis is critical as Pennsylvania grapples with health care workforce shortages that are among the most severe in the nation.



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Although there is no single or simple solution to solving Pennsylvania's health care workforce crisis as it intersects with the child care crisis, HAP supports initiatives that alleviate these burdens, including a comprehensive strategy to grow and support the health care workforce. This includes meeting the diverse needs of health care professionals—including those with young children—and empowering providers to better balance work and life obligations.

State government intervention and strategic policy are critical. If you would like to learn more about strategic recommendations from HAP's Health Care Talent Task Force, I invite you to read "[A Roadmap for Growing Pennsylvania's Health Care Talent](#)."

Thank you for your time, consideration, and prioritization of addressing the child care crisis in Pennsylvania.

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please contact me at SLawver@haponline.org or 717-564-9200. Please call on us if we can assist you in this vital work that will benefit all Pennsylvanians.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Sarah Lawver'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sarah Lawver
Senior Director, Legislative and Grassroots Advocacy

cc: Members of the House Children & Youth Committee