

# SACRAMENTO BUSINESS JOURNAL

## Commission says patching up California's health workforce would cost \$3 billion

By Felicia Alvarez  
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In the face of forecasts that show a widening gap between the number of primary care physicians and California's growing population, a recent study is pointing to \$3 billion in recommendations over the next 10 years to get California's health workforce back on track.

The recommendations arrive after 1 1/2 years of study by the California Future Health Workforce Commission, which is funded by philanthropies including the California Health Care Foundation, The California Endowment, Blue Shield of California Foundation, and the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation. Co-chairing the effort are Janet Napolitano, president of the University of California, and Lloyd Dean, CEO of Dignity Health.

"California does not have enough of the right health professionals with the right skills, in the right places to meet the needs of our state," Dean said on a conference call for news media Monday.

Napolitano described the outlook as a "looming health care worker crisis" as the state's population ages and segments of the health care workforce retire.

The recommendations are ambitious, aiming to add 47,000 more health workers and 14,500 physicians across the state by 2030.

Those efforts would counteract an anticipated shortfall of 4,100 primary care clinicians and 600,000 home health workers, according to the commission, as well as forecasts that the state will only have two-thirds of the psychiatrists it needs in the next decade.

Primary care workforce shortages are already rippling across Sacramento's health industry, as

recruiting new physicians takes longer and provider-to-patient ratios lag behind state averages.

In Sacramento County, the primary care physician-to-population ratio was 50.3 providers to 100,000 patients in 2015, lagging behind the recommended 60-to-100,000 ratio set by the Council on Graduate Medical Education

The commission is calling for increasing funding to University of California medical school programs, with UC Davis' School of Medicine aiming for about 248 additional graduates from 2023 to 2029, about a 6 percent increase in graduates per year.

Between UC Davis, UCLA and UC San Francisco, the schools would also educate 300 more nurse practitioners with post-masters training to enable them as psychiatric mental health nurses.

The commission is turning to state legislators and California's new governor, Gavin Newsom, in the coming weeks to discuss next steps for its recommendations.

The commission is also advising a broader scope of practice for nurse practitioners, who have been taking an increasing role in primary care.

The commission is advocating for a major boost to health education, including \$480 million in scholarships over 10 years, expansions for medical school enrollment at UC Davis, UCLA and UC San Francisco and 20 percent growth in the number of students in residency programs.