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Gov. Evers: Highlights budget investments to bolster the healthcare workforce and address shortages

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MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers today highlighted initiatives in his 2023-25 biennial budget targeted atbolstering the healthcare workforce and addressing shortages of nurses, certified nursing assistants (CNA), and other healthcare professionals that are impacting Wisconsinites' access to healthcare. The governor highlighted these initiatives during his visit to the University of Wisconsin (UW)-Eau Claire campus to host a roundtable discussion with nursing students about the workforce challenges facing the industry and the healthcare system as a whole.

As announced in December 2021, Gov. Evers provided UW-Eau Claire with up to $9.4 million through the Workforce Innovation Grant Program, which the governor is proposing to continue in his 2023-25 biennial budget, to support their efforts to alleviate workforce shortages in key fields like healthcare. In partnership with Mayo Clinic Health System in Northwest Wisconsin, this funding will help the university create innovative curriculum and clinical experiences to graduate more nurses, including adding six new degree programs in growing healthcare fields. Funding is also being used to pursue a new innovative care-coach model and rural healthcare hubs to bring better care and upskilled career possibilities to rural communities.

"Our healthcare professionals are on the frontlines every day, working to keep our friends, families, and loved ones safe and healthy, but this sector isn't immune to the longstanding workforce challenges impacting our state," said Gov. Evers. "Whether it's nurses, mental health providers, or other healthcare professionals, the

shortages are not only putting a drag on our economy, they're contributing to delays in care and negatively impacting patients' health. That's why our budget invests more than $150 million through the Workforce Innovation Grant Program and other targeted workforce initiatives to grow and expand our healthcare workforce so that folks in every community can get the care they need when they need it."

More information regarding the governor's proposals to bolster Wisconsin's healthcare workforce, address workforce shortages, and other initiatives to recruit and retain talented healthcare professionals is available below.

Bolstering Wisconsin's Healthcare Workforce
The governor's biennial budget includes a $200 million investment to continue the successful Workforce Innovation Grant Program to provide long-term solutions for businesses to find workers and individuals to obtain family-supporting jobs. Of that total investment, $100 million would have a specific focus on bolstering the state's healthcare workforce.

In addition to the $100 million investment, the governor is also allocating more than $50 million to address the healthcare workforce shortage, including:

- $22.5 million over the biennium to establish a separate, ongoing Innovation Grant program for healthcare employers to engage in improved recruitment and retention of long-term care providers;
- $10 million over the biennium for the highly successful nurse educators program, which provides incentives for nursing professors to stay in Wisconsin to teach the next generation of nurses;
- $8 million for the WisCaregiver Careers program, which aims to address the shortage of CNAs in the state by supporting the recruitment, training, and retention of individuals to care for nursing home residents across Wisconsin;
- $5 million in supplemental funding for the Worker Advancement Initiative to provide grants to local workforce development boards to connect individuals to healthcare-related opportunities and to support efforts by technical colleges and nursing schools to reduce barriers to graduation and assist students in pursuing health-related careers;
- $7 million over the biennium for a new psychiatry residency program through the Medical College of Wisconsin; and
- More than $1.5 million for the Qualified Treatment Trainee grant program, which facilitates the licensure and certification of those obtaining or already

possessing a graduate degree in psychology, counseling, marriage and family therapy, social work, nursing, or a closely related field. This investment aims to reduce the bottleneck of finding certified practitioners to supervise qualified treatment trainees and help them fulfill their supervised hours licensure requirement.

An online version of this release is available here.