

STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD
TWO THOUSAND AND SEVENTEEN

S.P. 362 - L.D. 1108

An Act To Restore Public Health Nursing Services

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

PART A

Sec. A-1. 22 MRSA §1963, sub-§3, as amended by PL 1995, c. 502, Pt. D, §4, is further amended to read:

3. Provide nursing services. To provide, ~~at the discretion of the director,~~ nursing services in communities that lack these services or in which these services are inadequate according to established standards; ~~and.~~ The Public Health Nursing Program shall provide to communities within the State nursing services, including, but not limited to:

- A. Treatment of and support for drug-affected babies and their parents;
- B. Assistance with public health emergencies, including, but not limited to, outbreaks of infectious disease, natural disasters and bioterrorist attacks;
- C. Early identification of children at risk of potential adverse childhood experiences to prevent future mental health and physical health issues;
- D. Support for chronic disease management to prevent costly hospitalizations and assistance to persons with chronic diseases who may not have health coverage;
- E. Early identification of persons at risk of domestic violence and referrals to community-based services as appropriate to those persons;
- F. Support for the public health infrastructure under chapter 152, including, but not limited to, the district coordinating councils for public health as defined in section 411, subsection 3 and local public health officers and the creation and implementation of district public health improvement plans; and
- G. Assistance with the public health assessment and planning responsibilities of the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention and hospitals located within the State;

H. Support and education for prenatal clients, parents and newborn infants who are at risk for health challenges;

I. Support for activities of programs within the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention, including, but not limited to, the Universal Childhood Immunization Program under section 1066 and environmental health and tuberculosis programs;

J. Support for activities of programs that serve refugee and immigrant health services programs; and

K. Support for the assessment of unmet health needs in the elderly population, especially in rural areas, and assisting elderly persons in finding and receiving medical or community-based services; and

Sec. A-2. 22 MRSA §§1964 and 1965 are enacted to read:

§1964. Required staffing

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, and without further approval or justification, the department shall promptly fill all public health nurse positions within the Public Health Nursing Program for which funding is provided.

The department shall widely post public notices for public health nurse vacancies under this section on publicly accessible state websites and in other appropriate locations. Public notice must be posted within 30 days of the effective date of this section for vacancies then existing and within 30 days of each subsequent vacancy that occurs. The department shall recruit and hire qualified individuals for these vacant positions.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the department may not transfer or otherwise repurpose any funds appropriated or allocated for the salaries, benefits and other costs of public health nurses and the services they provide.

§1965. Required office space; support for staff

The department shall provide office space and support services on a regional basis for the staff of the Public Health Nursing Program to the full extent of required staffing provided in section 1964 in order to derive the maximum benefit from the professional skills of public health nursing staff and to minimize unnecessary driving time.

PART B

Sec. B-1. Staffing levels. The staffing for the Public Health Nursing Program, established in the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 22, chapter 408 and required by Title 22, section 1964, must be achieved as soon as possible after enactment of this Act, but no later than March 1, 2018.

Sec. B-2. Report. The Director of the Public Health Nursing Program under the Department of Health and Human Services shall report in writing to the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services by December 15, 2017 and February 15, 2018 on the progress of the department in achieving full staffing of the Public Health Nursing Program as required by the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 22, section 1964.