

MASSACHUSETTS HEALTH POLICY
FORUM

June 22, 2000

Health Care Workforce Issues
in Massachusetts

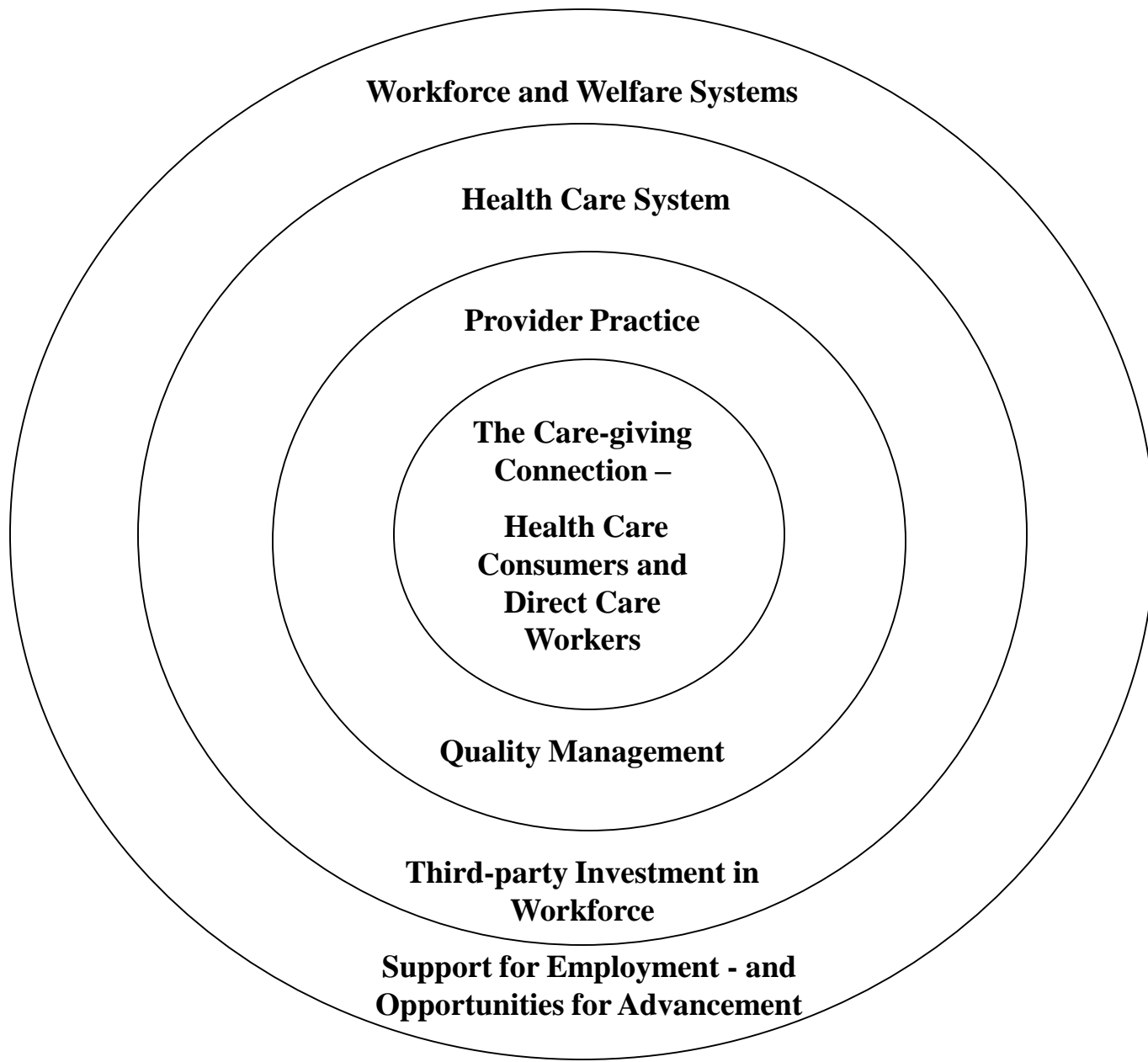
Prepared by:

Paraprofessional Healthcare Institute

30 Winter Street, 10th Floor

Boston, MA, 02130

Phone: 617-338-8478 ** FAX: 617-338-8479



Workforce and Welfare Systems

Health Care System

Provider Practice

**The Care-giving
Connection -**

**Health Care
Consumers and
Direct Care
Workers**

Quality Management

**Third-party Investment in
Workforce**

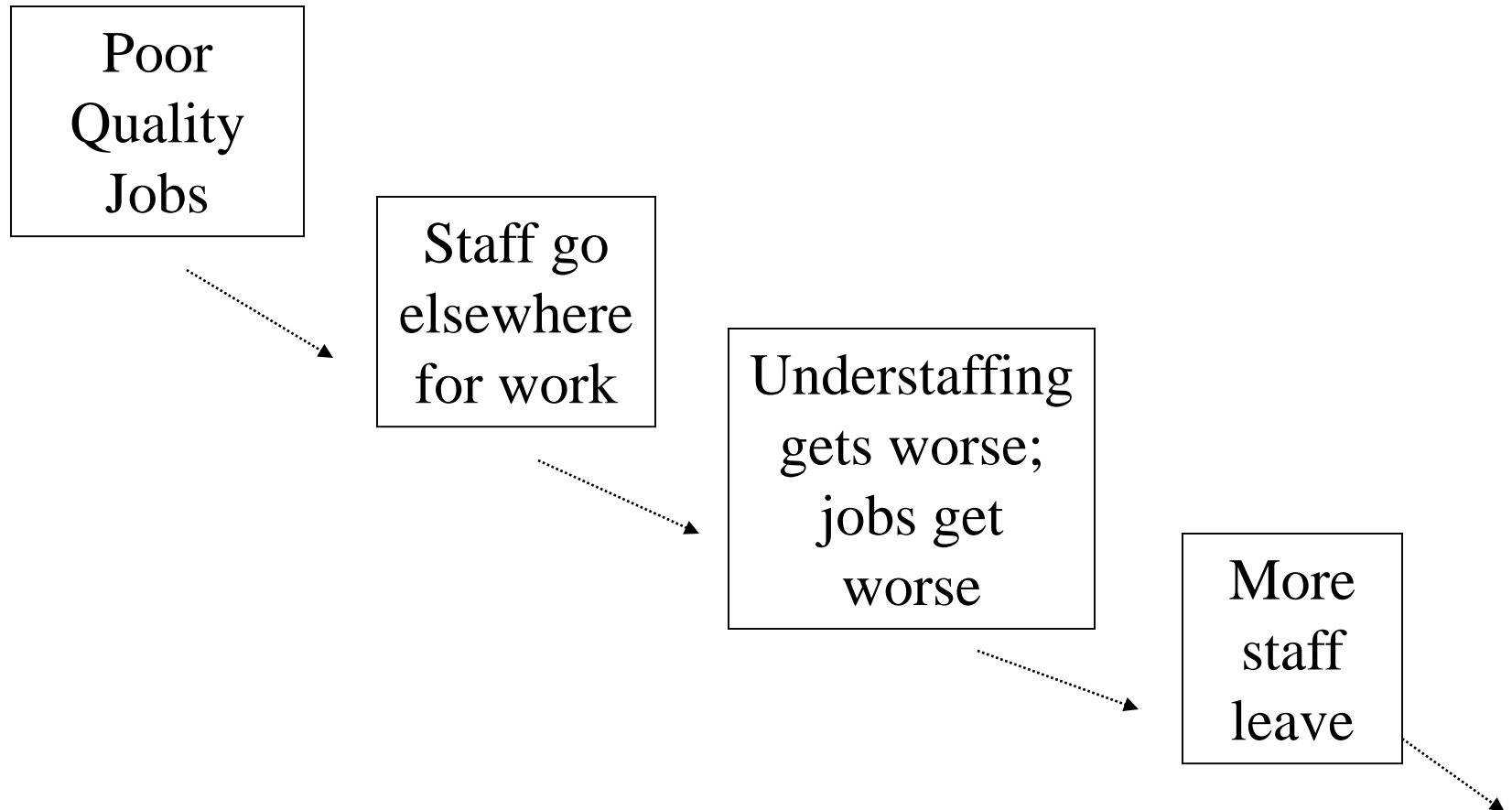
**Support for Employment - and
Opportunities for Advancement**

Unemployment rate $< 3\%$

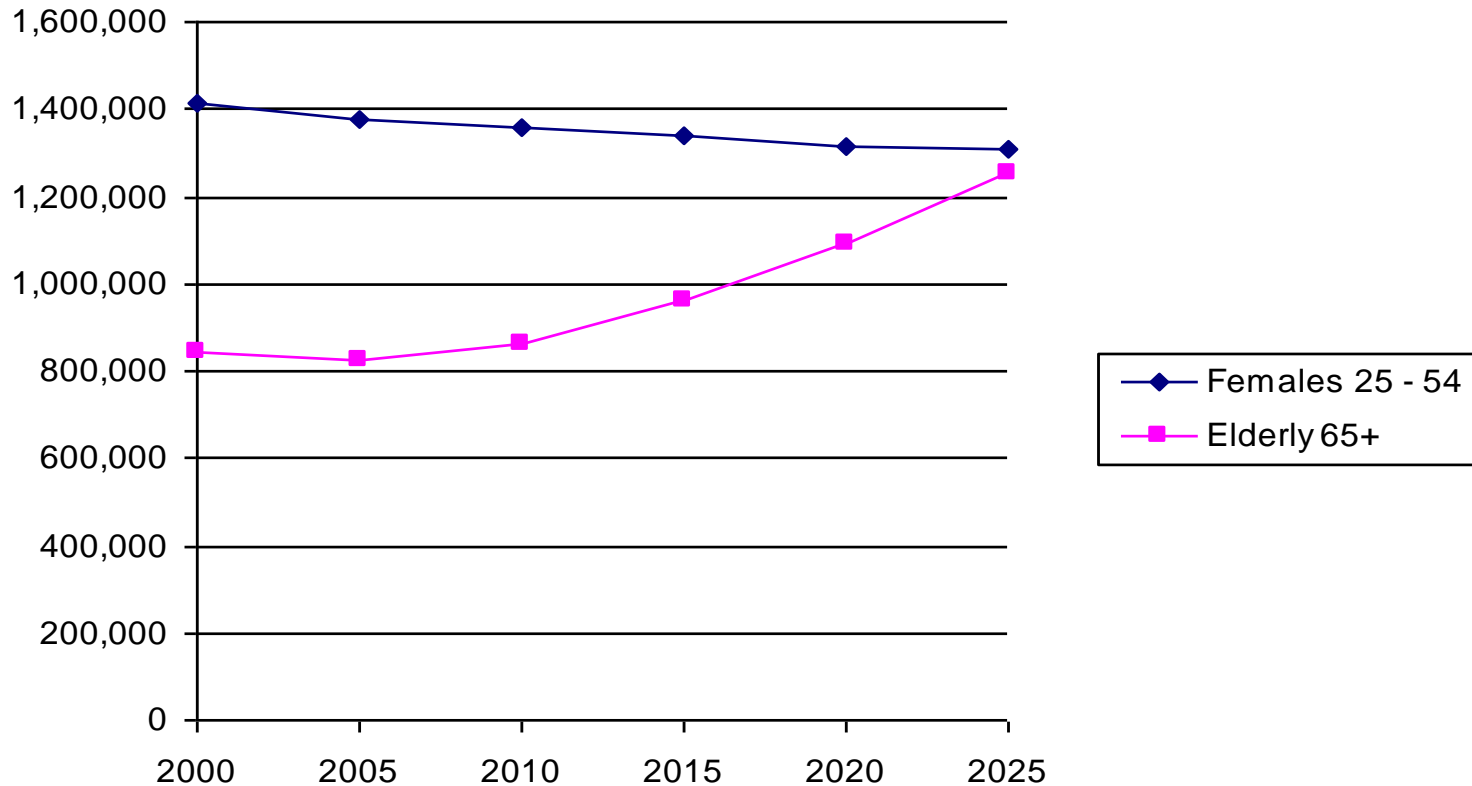
People are working...
They're just not working in
health care...

Vacancy Rates $> 12\%$

Downward Spiral



Elderly and Women of Care-Giving Age



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates Program at www.census.gov/population/estimates/state

Staffing Crisis:

Demand - Supply - Price

Demand:

- Growing aging population
- Higher acuity
- Labor intensive

Supply:

- Decreasing workforce
- Decreasing 25-54 year old population
- Lots of better options

Price: Wages, Benefits, Workloads, Training, Opportunities for Advancement, Respect, Overall Working Conditions

What Health Care Pays for Labor –

Poor Quality Jobs:

- **Wages** – half what's needed for family self-sufficiency
- **Benefits** – many lack health insurance
- **Workloads** – rushed care; over-time; injuries;
- **Training** – inadequate preparation and few opportunities for advancement
- **Overall Working Conditions** – negative work culture

Poor Quality Jobs Affect Quality Care

High turnover and high vacancy rates:

- Disrupt continuity and individualized care
- Cause physical and psycho-social deterioration
 - Malnutrition, dehydration, incontinence, skin breakdown
 - Isolation, loneliness, depression
- Divert resources from care to turnover
- Lose experienced mentors on staff

Framework for Action

- **Sectoral**
 - In long term care – home and facility-based
- **Intersect health care / workforce systems**
 - In policy, program, data collection and planning
- **Staged**
 - Immediate action to stem the downward spiral
 - Longer term planning, oversight and implementation

Immediate and Longer Term Action

- **Immediate** – stem the downward spiral –
 - Action now to retain and attract direct care workers
 - Long-term care as a Gateway to Employment – support new entrants to the workforce
- **Long-term** –workforce strategy thru 2030 –
 - Workforce Commission
 - Coordinated data analysis and dissemination

Workforce Development

Pathways to Advancement

Incumbent Worker Training Employer
Counseling and Assistance

Health Care System

Higher wages and benefits

Upgrade training

Higher staffing standards

Culture change

DIRECT CARE WORKERS

Pre-and post-employment education and
services:

- Child-care and transportation assistance
- Adult Basic Education

Medicaid Expansion: Expand health
care coverage to health care workers

Access to Quality Jobs

Access to Health Care

Immediate Action to Stabilize Workforce: Make Direct Care Jobs Competitive in the Labor Market

Wages	Raise wage levels
Benefits	Provide health insurance
Training	Improve entry-level training Create pathways to advancement
Workload	Establish safe staffing levels
Treatment	Quality management and supervision
Support	Assist workers entering the workforce

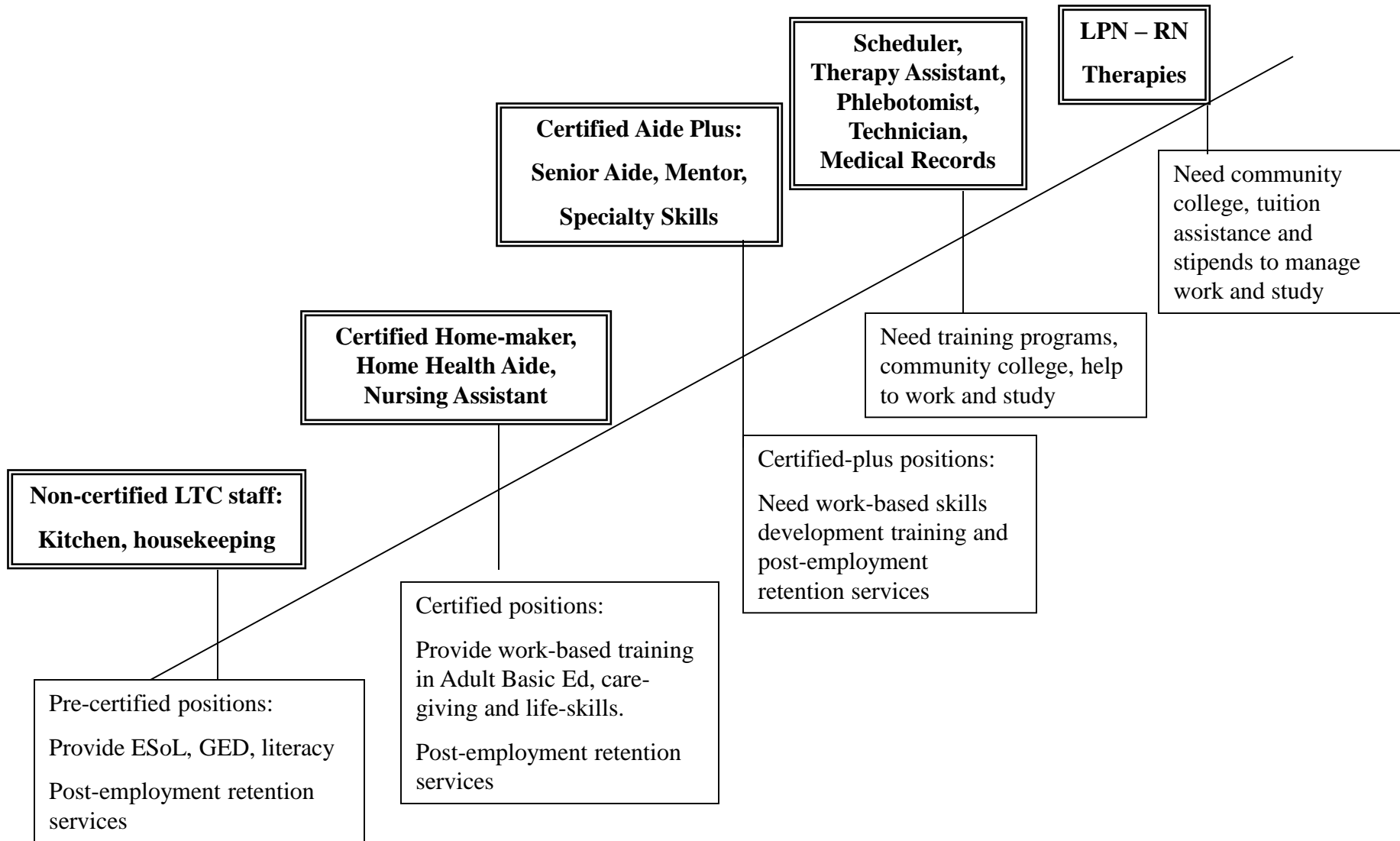
Improving Wages and Benefits

- **Wages** –
 - Wage pass-through
 - Recalibrate wages through step increases
 - Evaluate wages within labor market
- **Health Insurance** –
 - Expand coverage under public programs
 - Subsidize employer-based insurance
 - Maximize CHIP

Training

- Improve curriculum and teaching methods for pre-service and in-service training
- Increase length of preparatory period, add orientation period
- Provide training specific to care needs
- Develop opportunities for advancement
- Provide Adult Basic Ed

Career Pathways in Long Term Care Opportunities for Advancement



Workloads and Working Conditions

- **Workloads**
 - Safe staffing levels
 - Sufficient hours for full-time work
- **Working Conditions – Culture Change**
 - Inclusive Management
 - Quality Supervision
 - Team approaches
 - Peer support

Gateway to Employment – Supports for New Workers

- Adequate preparation for successful employment
- Support to overcome barriers to work
- Post-employment counseling and job retention assistance
- Incumbent worker training in Adult Basic Ed and skills upgrades

Efforts Already Underway

- **Legislative** – Joint hearings; proposed budget provides comprehensive approach
- **Stakeholders** – Consumers, labor, and providers are working together within long-term care
- **Provider Practice** – LTC associations are collaborating to develop better management and supervision practices
- **Workforce Development** – Committed to long-term care as priority area

Longer Term Action: Provide a Workforce as Demand for Health Care Increases

Coordination and Oversight	Create a Health Care Workforce Commission through 2025
Restructure Workforce Policy	Make health care jobs more competitive in labor market
Data Collection; Public Disclosure	Report on labor market and health care utilization data
Education	Fund nursing education and on-the-job skills development
Culture Change	Improve the quality of the health care work environment