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Helping Leaders Advance Child Health Care Transformation

Federal Actions and Proposals to Expand and Enhance the Frontline Health, Education, and Human Services Workforce

Charles Bruner, InCK Marks Overview Compilation, June, 2021

Summary

The federal government – through actions by the White House and Congress – is moving to make potentially transformational investments in a frontline health, education and human services workforce – **to invest more than \$1 trillion over the next decade to create over 3 million new frontline jobs in these helping professions.** This includes investments in direct care workers providing home and community-based services to seniors and persons with disabilities, child care and preschool teachers providing safe and developmentally-enriching environments for young children while their parents work, and public health and community health workers providing outreach, care coordination, and support to advance health equity in underserved and low-income communities. This includes new investments in schools in high poverty communities and their teachers, nurses, and mental health staffing. This includes increased investments in community health centers to expand responses to address health-related social, developmental, and economic as well as medical needs of the children and families being served. In all of these, attention is directed to improving the compensation, training, and rights of this workforce so these can be seen as career employment opportunities, with livable wages.

Substantial investments already have been made through the American Rescue Plan Act to initiate these actions. Sustainable long-term investments are being proposed as a core part of the President’s infrastructure proposals – both in the American Jobs Plan Act and the American Families Plan Act – and as part of the 2022 budget.

There are many different elements to these proposals that represent the purview of different federal agencies and different Congressional committees. This represents a summary and initial compilation (particularly in the Appendix) of different proposals, Congressional bills, and other actions that speak to different elements of these overall investments. In terms of the White House and its recommendations for funding, the following are some of the major elements and recommendations for investment.

MAJOR ELEMENTS OF WHITE HOUSE RECOMMENDATIONS RELATED TO A HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND HUMAN SERVICES WORKFORCE AS INFRASTRUCTURE

American Jobs Plan – \$400 billion over ten years to expand and strengthen the home and community-based direct care workforce, including services funded under the home and community-based provision in Medicaid.

American Families Plan – \$220 billion over ten years to expand and strengthen child care and make it more affordable, and \$200 billion over ten years in partnership with states to create a universal preschool system for three and four-year olds.

American Rescue Plan Act – \$7.66 billion to expand and strengthen a public health infrastructure, with a major focus upon expanding a community health workforce in underserved and low income communities, and \$7.6 billion for community health centers, with a focus upon improving their capacity to respond to social and developmental concerns of clients served, including children.

2022 President’s Discretionary Fund Budget – \$20 billion in additional funding for high poverty schools through Title I; \$8.7 billion to the CDC for continuation of expansions of public health infrastructure initiated in the American Rescue Plan; and multiple other increases in funding for health, education, and human services block grants and programs.

Introduction

COVID-19 has made clear the centrality of direct, frontline workers in health, child care, and human services in responding to natural disasters and crises. President Biden and Congress included substantial new funding in the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 to support these workers in responding to COVID-19 and, beyond that, being in place for the future. President Biden is proposing long-term actions to create more than 3 million new frontline jobs in child care, home health care, and public and community health staffing through the American Jobs Plan and the American Families Plan as a core part of America’s infrastructure. A variety of bills have been introduced in Congress to recognize and support this work, both paid and unpaid. President Biden’s plan during his campaign for a \$775 billion, ten-year investments in a 21st Century Caregiving and Education Workforce is now reflected in his infrastructure proposals and his 2022 budget submitted to Congress.

There further is increased recognition that most of these frontline workers are women, disproportionately persons of color, and often compensated at among the lowest levels of all jobs in society and not for the value they provide. The emphasis in providing public support is to set priorities on hiring new staff in underserved and lower-income communities and to make this work better compensated, with more training opportunities and rights, and with expanded opportunities for career development. Many of these workers are themselves mothers of children, and improving their economic position has impacts upon their own children’s health and the family’s ability to invest in them.

The following provides an overview of the current status of action to expand and enrich this frontline health, education, and human services workforce and to support those who provide unpaid care in supporting their family members. This includes White House actions and proposals and different legislative bills and statements directed to this workforce (for more detail, see the Appendix)..

Direct Care Workforce Providing Home and Community-Based Services

As part of his 21st Century Caregiving and Education Workforce campaign plans, President Biden proposed investing \$400 billion over the next ten years in expanding and better compensating direct care frontline workers providing home and community-based services. This proposal is now a part of the American Jobs Plan Act, where the White House has described it as “expanding access to quality, affordable home- or community-based care for aging relatives and people with disabilities” through access to long-term care services through Medicaid, including its home and community-based services plan. There are multiple bills in Congress that have been introduced both to enhance this direct care workforce and to provide support to family members providing unpaid care to support their members.

See Appendix on Direct Care Workforce for Descriptions of these Plans and Activities

Community-Based Health Workforce and Public Health Workforce

During the campaign, President Biden called for an investment of \$6.5 billion annually to add 100,000 additional community health workers and better compensate them as part of establishing a more robust public health response system for future pandemics and disasters and to respond to ongoing needs in underserved and lower-income communities. Some of the funding included in the American CARES Acts and the American Rescue Plan Act has been directed to grants to strengthen public health services and, in particular, to support increased community-health worker staff in underserved and lower-income communities.

In calling upon CDC to develop a \$3 billion grant program for public health through American Rescue Plan Act funding, the White House has recommended priority in hiring workers from lower-income and underserved communities and supporting community health workers. There are multiple pieces of legislation introduced in Congress to expand the public health infrastructure and/or increase the numbers of community-health workers.

Community health workers are viewed as providing outreach and referral services in lower-income and underserved communities and engaging residents and responding to social determinants of health. While funding also has been directed to strengthening the public health workforce generally, including public health nurses and epidemiologists and other professional staff, a significant emphasis is also upon supporting community health workers, promotores, and other staff hired from within communities to engage and build trust within lower-income and underserved communities. It has recognized that these workers are predominantly women and disproportionately of color and often compensated at \$12 or less per hour. Increasing the number and compensation of these community health workers is viewed as key to addressing health equity issues in lower-income and underserved communities that often reflect races and ethnicities that have been marginalized and face the greatest health challenges.

See Appendix on Community-Health Workers for descriptions of these Plans and Activities.

Child Care and Preschool Workforce

A prominent part of the 21st Century Caregiving and Education Workforce Plan of President Biden during the campaign was a major investment in the quality, compensation, and size of the child care community. Substantial funding in the American Cares Acts and the American Rescue Plan Act have been specifically devoted to bolstering the child care workforce in light of the disruptions to it caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, with over \$60 billion devoted to provide relief and rescue activities.

As part of the American Jobs Plan, the White House is proposing continuation of this support for early care and education, with ten-year investments in child care and pre-school totaling \$420 billion.

Historically, there has been a fundamental mismatch between what parents can afford to pay for child care while they work and what it would cost to provide high quality care, with commensurate compensation for the child care workforce. The investments proposed by the Administration recognize the need for government to address that mismatch and close that gap, both to enable families with young children to be productive in the workforce and to ensure children receive the safe and developmental care and education they deserve.

In addition, the White House is calling for expansions to paid family leave, to make it more possible for families to stay at home when their children are very young. Multiple pieces of legislation have been introduced in Congress to advance both child care and family leave.

See Appendix on Child Care and Preschool for description of the President's Plan

Other Investments in a Health, Education, and Human Services Infrastructure

As part his campaign plans, President Biden committed to triple funding for Title I and to increase the number of nurses and mental health workers in schools. The American Rescue Plan Act provided \$129 billion to public education that could be used flexibly in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. President Biden's 2022 budget calls for more than a doubling of funding for Title I and other increases to support special education, which offers the potential for substantial increases in health and mental health and other services in schools, particularly Title I schools.

During the campaign, President Biden also called for a doubling of funding for federally-qualified community health centers and adding a child development expert in every community health center. The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 provide \$6.7 billion to effectively double the investments in federally-qualified health centers, which can be used, among other purposes, to expand responses to children's developmental needs.

In addition, the American Rescue Plan Act and the 2022 budget provide additional funding for community mental health services, Head Start, and other block grants and services that provide frontline support to children and families.

Appendix

Direct Care Workforce Provisions

White House Fact Sheet: American Jobs Plan – Provisions on Care Economy

Solidify the infrastructure of our care economy by creating jobs and raising wages and benefits for essential home care workers. These workers – the majority of whom are women of color – have been underpaid and undervalued for too long. The President’s plan makes substantial investments in the infrastructure of our care economy, starting by creating new and better jobs for caregiving workers. His plan will provide home and community-based care for individuals who otherwise would need to wait as many as five years to get the services they badly need.

SOLIDIFY THE INFRASTRUCTURE OF OUR CARE ECONOMY BY CREATING JOBS AND RAISING WAGES AND BENEFITS FOR ESSENTIAL HOME CARE WORKERS. Even before COVID-19, our country was in the midst of a caregiving crisis. In addition to caring for children, families feel the financial burden of caring for aging relatives and family members with disabilities, and there is a financial strain for people with disabilities living independently to ensure that they are getting care in their homes. At the same time, hundreds of thousands of people who need better care are unable to access it, even though they qualify under Medicaid. In fact, it can take years for these individuals to get the services they badly need. Aging relatives and people with disabilities deserve better. They deserve high-quality services and support that meet their unique needs and personal choices.

Caregivers – who are disproportionately women of color – have been underpaid and undervalued for far too long. Wages for essential home care workers are approximately \$12 per hour, putting them among the lowest paid workers in our economy. In fact, one in six workers in this sector live in poverty. President Biden is calling on Congress to make substantial investments in the infrastructure of care in our country. Specifically, he is calling on Congress to put \$400 billion toward expanding access to quality, affordable home- or community-based care for aging relatives and people with disabilities. These investments will help hundreds of thousands of Americans finally obtain the long-term services and support they need, while creating new jobs and offering caregiving workers a long-overdue raise, stronger benefits, and an opportunity to organize or join a union and collectively bargain. Research shows that increasing the pay of direct care workers greatly enhances workers’ financial security, improves productivity, and increases the quality of care offered. Another study showed that increased pay for care workers prevented deaths, reduced the number of health violations, and lowered the cost of preventative care.

President Biden’s plan will:

- Expand access to long-term care services under Medicaid. President Biden believes more people should have the opportunity to receive care at home, in a supportive community, or from a loved one. President Biden’s plan will expand access to home and community-based services (HCBS) and extend the longstanding Money Follows the Person program that supports innovations in the delivery of long-term care.
- Put in place an infrastructure to create good middle-class jobs with a free and fair choice to join a union. The HCBS expansion under Medicaid can support well-paying caregiving jobs that include benefits and the ability to collectively bargain, building state infrastructure to improve the quality of services and to support workers. This will improve wages and quality of life for essential home health workers and yield significant economic benefits for low-income communities and communities of color.

Congressional Proposals to Expand the Direct Care Workforce and Provide Support to Volunteer and Unpaid Direct Care

The Direct Care, Advancement and Retention of Employment (CARE) Opportunity Act of 2021 (HR 2999) in the House authorizes a new \$300 million grant program to advance the direct care workforce, with an outline of how to strengthen that direct care workforce.

The Credit for Caring Act (Ernst – R, Bennet -D, Capito – R, and Warren -M) would provide a nonrefundable federal tax credit would give qualifying caregivers who work a 30 percent credit for qualified expenses they paid or incurred above \$2,000 to help offset the costs of services for family members like home care aides, adult day care and respite care as well as home modifications like ramps and smart-home technology that make caregiving at home safer and easier.

Community-Based Workforce Provisions

White House Proposals and Actions

During the campaign, Presidential candidate Joe Biden called for funding of community health workers as a part (circa \$6.5 billion for 100,000 workers annually) of a 21st Century Caregivers and Education Plan that would provide \$775 billion over 10 years to expand direct care, community health, and child care frontline staff in their work.

President Biden has continued to press for this level of investment, making it a core element in his infrastructure plans, as well as including initial investments within the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021.

Congressional Actions to Date

CARES Act of 2020 – Provided the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) with funding that CDC has used to issue a \$300 million, three-year grant program application request (Notice of Funding Opportunity – NOFO) to support community health workers in high need areas and for priority populations, with a community coalition at the county level overseeing contracting with community organizations and ensuring integration with other health services.

American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 – Provided the CDC \$7.66 billion in additional funding for responding to COVID-19 immediately but also to address the needs of vulnerable populations longer-term, with specific reference to the option to use these funds to support community health workers and promote community resilience. In proposing such funding to Congress, President Biden indicated that a major share be used to employ community health workers. CDC has been directed to develop a \$3 billion grant program for a public health workforce that includes community-based workers.

Bills in Congress

Public Health Infrastructure Saves Lives Act (Murray in Senate) – authorizes formula grants to local health departments to expand the public health workforce, starting with \$750 million in FY2022 increasing to \$4.5 billion in FY2026 and subsequent years

Health Force, Resilience Force, and Jobs to Fight COVID-19 Act of 2021 (Panetta in House and Gillibrand and Bennet in the Senate) – authorizes \$40 billion each in 2021 and 2022 for a Health Force within focal, high need communities, administered through CDC with the intent of ten-year funding.

Building a Sustainable Workforce for Healthy Communities Act of 2021 (Casey) – authorizes \$8 billion in annual funding to employ, through a competitive grant process for community-based organizations, 150,000 community health workers. Defines community health worker as “trusted member of the community who has an unusually close understanding of the community” and enumerates specific roles, skills and competencies, and responsibilities of organizations employing those workers. Emphasizes their service in underserved areas and with low-income and diverse populations. Emphasizes their multiple roles in care coordination, in providing preventive services, and in serving as a bridge and advocates for and with the populations served.

Congressional Resolutions and Sign-On Statements

Resolution to Dramatically Expand and Strengthen the Caregiving Workforce (Bowman in the House and Warren in the Senate): Including 52 “whereas’s” related the caregiving economy, inclusive of health, education, and human services, calls for “raising the pay, benefits, protections, and standards for existing care workers” and “creating millions of new care jobs over 24 the next decade, including as part of existing and new public jobs programs.”

Sign-on Letter to Congressional Leaders (Khanna in the House and Warren in the Senate with 139 colleagues) – calls upon Congress to create “250,000 permanent, high-paying public health jobs to rebuild our depleted public health workforce,” with recognition that “workers can be recruited from and serve their home communities, and they should be trained in alignment with best practices.”

Child Care and Preschool Provisions

White House Fact Sheet on American Families Plan – Child Care and Preschool Provisions

CHILD CARE. The high cost of child care continues to make it hard for parents – especially women — to work outside the home provide for their families. ... High-quality early care and education lay a strong foundation so that children can take full advantage of education and training opportunities later in life. ...

Building on the American Jobs Plan’s investments in school and child care infrastructure and workforce training, President Biden’s American Families Plan will ensure low and middle-income families pay no more than 7 percent of their income on high-quality child care for children under 5 years-old, saving the average family \$14,800 per year on child care expenses, while also generating lifetime benefits for three million children, supporting hundreds of thousands of child care providers and workers, allowing roughly one million parents, primarily mothers, to enter the labor force, and significantly bolstering inclusive and equitable economic growth.

Specifically, President Biden’s plan will invest \$225 billion to:

- Make child care affordable. Families will pay only a portion of their income based on a sliding scale. For the most hard-pressed working families, child care costs for their young children would be fully covered and families earning 1.5 times their state median income will pay no more than 7 percent of their income for all children under age five. The plan will also provide families with a range of inclusive and accessible options to choose from for their child, from child care centers to family child care providers to Early Head Start.
- Invest in high-quality child care. Child care providers will receive funding to cover the true cost of quality early childhood care and education—including a developmentally appropriate curriculum, small class sizes, and culturally and linguistically responsive environments that are inclusive of children with disabilities. These investments support positive interactions that promote children’s social-emotional and cognitive development.
- Invest in the child care workforce. More investment is needed to support early childhood care providers and educators, more than nine in ten of whom are women and more than four in ten of whom are women of color. They are among the most underpaid workers in the country and nearly half receive public income support programs. The typical child care worker earned \$12.24 per hour in 2020—while receiving few, if any, benefits, leading to high turnover and lower quality of care. This investment will mean a \$15 minimum wage for early childhood staff and ensure that those with similar qualifications as kindergarten teachers receive comparable compensation and benefits. And, it will ensure child care workers receive job-embedded coaching and professional development, along with additional training opportunities funded by the American Jobs Plan and American Families Plan. These investments will lead

to better quality care, while also enabling these workers to care for their own families, reducing government spending on income support programs and increasing tax revenues.

UNIVERSAL PRE-SCHOOL FOR ALL THREE- AND FOUR-YEAR-OLDS. Preschool is critical to ensuring that children start kindergarten with the skills and supports that set them up for success in school. In fact, research shows that kids who attend universal pre-K are more likely to take honors classes and less likely to repeat a grade, and another study finds low-income children who attend universal programs do better in math and reading as late as eighth grade. Unfortunately, many children, but especially children of color and low-income children, do not have access to the full range of high-quality pre-school programs available to their more affluent peers. In addition to providing critical benefits for children, preschool has also been shown to increase labor force participation among parents – especially women — boosting family earnings and driving economic growth. By some estimates, the benefits of a universal pre-K system to U.S. GDP are more than three times greater than the investment needed to provide this service.

- President Biden is calling for a national partnership with states to offer free, high-quality, accessible, and inclusive preschool to all three-and four-year-olds, benefitting five million children and saving the average family \$13,000, when fully implemented. This historic **\$200 billion investment in America's future** will first prioritize high-need areas and enable communities and families to choose the settings that work best for them. The President's plan will also ensure that all publicly-funded preschool is high-quality, with low student-to-teacher ratios, high-quality and developmentally appropriate curriculum, and supportive classroom environments that are inclusive for all students. The President's plan will leverage investments in tuition-free community college and teacher scholarships to support those who wish to earn a bachelor's degree or another credential that supports their work as an educator, or to become an early childhood educator. And, educators will receive job-embedded coaching, professional development, and wages that reflect the importance of their work. All employees in participating pre-K programs and Head Start will earn at least \$15 per hour, and those with comparable qualifications will receive compensation commensurate with that of kindergarten teachers. These investments will give American children a head start and pave the way for the best-educated generation in U.S. history.

Select Additional White House Recommendations in 2022 Budget

OMB MAY 28TH FACT SHEET. The Budget:

- Makes Historic **Investments in High-Poverty Schools.** The Budget proposes a historic \$36.5 billion investment in Title I schools, a \$20 billion increase from the 2021 enacted level. This investment would provide historically under-resourced schools with the funding needed to deliver a high-quality education to all of their students.
- Improves **Readiness for Future Public Health Crises.** The Budget includes \$8.7 billion in discretionary funding for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)—the largest budget authority increase in nearly two decades—to restore capacity at the world's preeminent public health agency and rebuild international capacity to detect, prepare for, and respond to emerging global threats.

WHITE HOUSE FACT SHEET ON THE 2022 Budget (in addition to above):

Boosts Support for **Children with Disabilities.** To ensure that children with disabilities have the opportunity to thrive, the Budget includes \$16 billion, a \$2.7 billion increase from the 2021 enacted level, for Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) grants that would support special education and related services for more than 7.6 million preschool through grade 12 students. This is a significant first step toward fully funding IDEA. The Budget also provides \$732 million for early intervention services for infants and toddlers with disabilities or delays, funding services that have a proven record of improving academic and developmental outcomes. The \$250 million

increase for early intervention services would be paired with reforms to expand access to these services for underserved children, including children of color and children from low-income families.

Prioritizes the **Physical and Mental Well-Being of Students**. Recognizing the profound effect of physical and mental health on academic achievement, the Budget provides \$1 billion in addition to the resources in the American Rescue Plan, to increase the number of counselors, nurses, and mental health professionals in schools. In addition, the Budget provides \$443 million for Full Service Community Schools, which play a critical role in providing comprehensive wrap-around services to students and their families, from afterschool programs, to adult education opportunities, to health and nutrition services.