

**Amendment - 2nd Reading-yellow - Requested by: Jonathan Windy Boy - (S) Committee of the Whole**

- 2025

69th Legislature 2025

Drafter: Chanan Brown,

SB0526.001.002

1 SENATE BILL NO. 526

2 INTRODUCED BY J. WINDY BOY, S. NOVAK, T. CROWE, S. FYANT, J. SOOKTIS, J. MORIGEAU, F.  
3 SMITH, C. SPRUNGER, S. WEBBER, M. FOX, J. COHENOUR, P. FLOWERS, T. FRANCE, D. HAWK, C.  
4 KEOGH, A. OLSEN

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6 A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE COMMUNITY HEALTH AIDE PROVIDER  
7 EDUCATION GRANT PROGRAM; PROVIDING ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA; PROVIDING MAXIMUM GRANT  
8 AMOUNTS; PROVIDING RECIPIENT REPORTING REQUIREMENTS; REQUIRING REPORTS TO THE  
9 LEGISLATURE; PROVIDING AN ALLOCATION; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE."

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11 WHEREAS, there is a primary care crisis in Indian Country; and

12 WHEREAS, American Indian and Alaska Native people in Montana have very limited access to health  
13 care services and are disproportionately affected by oral health care, primary health care, and behavioral health  
14 care disparities, which are directly attributed to a lack of health care professionals in Indian communities and  
15 have caused a serious access issue and backlog of many health care services for American Indian and Alaska  
16 Native citizens in Montana; and

17 WHEREAS, the tribes of Montana successfully partnered to provide training and education for dental  
18 health aide practitioners who will go on to serve urban and rural American Indian populations with the specific  
19 purpose of improving population oral health through filling service gaps, community outreach, and offering  
20 culturally responsive care; and

21 WHEREAS, tribal clinics are often the only dental clinic that accepts Medicaid-eligible patients in rural  
22 areas. Increasing provider capacity at tribal clinics will benefit the entire community. Even in instances where  
23 the tribe does not provide health care to nonbeneficiaries, increasing provider capacity at clinics serving  
24 Medicaid-eligible individuals benefits all patients because of the overall increases in capacity; and

25 WHEREAS, many tribes in Montana have great difficulty and face challenges in recruiting and retaining  
26 health care professionals in their communities, resulting in further challenges to ensure continuity and  
27 comprehensive health care for all people in Montana under Article II, section 3, of the Montana Constitution;

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dental health aide providers; and

(e) population health data describing the effectiveness of community health aide and dental health aide providers in improving access to primary care and primary oral health care, including:

(i) numbers and service categories of patients served compared to years without community health aide or dental health aide providers;

(ii) types of health care services provided by clinics employing community health aide and dental health aide providers;

(iii) utilization data for local emergency medical services;

(iv) chronic care disease management data;

(v) medicaid utilization;

(vi) numbers of new patients served;

(vii) clinic wait time trends; and

(viii) distances traveled by patients to receive care.

(6) The commissioner shall create and administer a grant program that meets the goals and requirements of this section. The commissioner shall utilize the data reported under subsection (5) and shall submit an annual report on the administration and outcomes of the program to the education interim committee and to the children, families, health, and human services interim committee in accordance with 5-11-210.

**NEW SECTION. Section 2. Community health aide provider education account.** (1) There is a community health aide provider education account in the state special revenue fund established in 17-2-102. The account is administered by the commissioner of higher education.

(2) Money transferred from any lawful source, including but not limited to gifts, grants, donations, securities, and other assets, public or private, may be deposited in the account.

(3) Money deposited in the account must be used for the purposes described in [section 1].

(4) Interest and income earned on the account and any unspent or unencumbered money in the account at the end of the fiscal year must remain in the account.

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**NEW SECTION. Section 3. Transfer of funds.** By June 30, 2025, the state treasurer shall transfer \$1 from the general fund to the account provided for in [section 2].

**NEW SECTION. Section 4. Allocation.** ~~(1)~~ There is allocated ~~\$1.5 million \$1~~ from the ~~general fund~~ community health aide provider education account established in [section 2] to the commissioner of higher education for the biennium beginning July 1, 2025, for the purposes described in [section 1].

~~(2) — The legislature intends that the allocation in this section be considered part of the ongoing base for the next legislative session.~~

**NEW SECTION. Section 5. Notification to tribal governments.** The secretary of state shall send a copy of [this act] to each federally recognized tribal government in Montana.

**NEW SECTION. Section 6. Codification instruction.** [Section 1] is intended to be codified as an integral part of Title 20, chapter 25, part 4, and the provisions of Title 20, chapter 25, part 4, apply to [section 1].

**NEW SECTION. Section 7. Effective date.** [This act] is effective July 1, 2025.

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