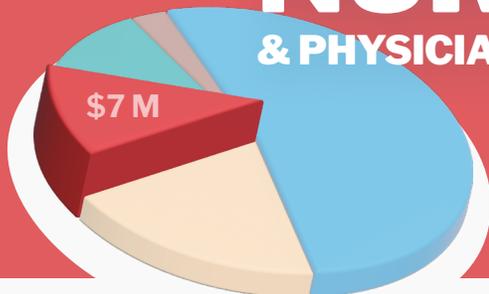


ADDRESSING THE WORKFORCE SHORTAGE:

# NURSING & PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS



**THE STATE SYSTEM IS SEEKING \$112 MILLION IN NEW FUNDING\***

\$7 million of that amount will be used for financial aid to reduce costs for students pursuing nursing and physician assistant jobs

## The POWER of PASSHE:

- 4,678 nursing and physician assistant students at PASSHE universities
- 83% of PASSHE nursing and physician assistant graduates are still working in PA a decade after graduation
- 9% of PA's nursing shortage can be filled by PASSHE by 2030

### The Need:

A shortage of nurses and physician assistants is challenging the ability of hospitals, nursing homes and other healthcare facilities. Beyond filling the unprecedented number of job openings, these are high-growth jobs. Meeting the needs of Pennsylvania's aging population will require 9% more nurses, 33% more nurse practitioners, and 34% more physician assistants by 2030.

### PASSHE Solution:

The State System is a major educator of Pennsylvania's medical workers, with healthcare as the third largest academic program. The System is ready to help meet the need for more nurses. The State System is seeking a targeted investment of \$112 million in new funding to produce more graduates in six high-growth jobs, including nursing. PASSHE plans to use \$5.5 million of that amount to expand these high-cost programs, and \$7 million to provide direct financial relief to nursing and physician assistant students, saving high-need students an average of \$5,000 per year.

\* PASSHE is also seeking \$573.5 million, an inflationary increase of \$21 million (or 3.8%), that combined with the \$112 million in new funding for targeted student support would enable the Board of Governors to consider freezing the basic in-state undergraduate tuition rate for an unprecedented fifth consecutive year.

## Nursing Innovation



When COVID hit, emergency room personnel struggled to care for soaring numbers of patients with respiratory symptoms. Instead of working on campus each day, **Dr. Tom White '94, '99, PennWest Edinboro**, pulled up a chair in front of his home office computer to meet with staff via Zoom conferences and advise graduate nursing students online.

Prior to the pandemic, nursing instructors met with undergraduate students in classrooms and clinical settings. COVID-19 meant the staff needed to quickly adapt a complex, hands-on curriculum to remote, online lessons.

White's department developed innovative responses to the challenge. "Our faculty were outstanding," he said. "They came up with creative ways to deliver the content and meet the course objectives."

The 2020 nursing class graduated on schedule, ready to join the medical community's fight against the virus.

As usual, many of those in-demand graduates accepted jobs close to home—even though they could work and live just about anywhere they choose.

## Helping Hands: Tight-knit Nursing Community Nurtures Legacy of Mentorship



When the time came for Cranesville, Pa., native **Heather Bowers** to choose a career path, the decision was easy. Nursing emerged as the ideal blend of her greatest passions – science and helping others.

And for Bowers, who graduated in May with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing and a minor in biology, choosing to attend **PennWest Edinboro** was even easier.

"Edinboro has an amazing nursing program, and I wanted something that was both affordable and close to my family," she said. "It was kind of a no-brainer."

Bowers, now a registered nurse at UPMC Hamot in Erie, Pa., served as a tutor for other students in the department who needed assistance with coursework or advice on developing study habits. She was also a scholar in the Honors College and a member of Student Nurses of Edinboro – a group of nursing students who organize career-building opportunities and give back to the community through volunteer events.

"You know, it is hard. The long nights of studying can be brutal," Bowers said. "But if you love something, then you just have to persevere. Because at the end of the day, the people that we help and the lives that we get to save are 110% worth it."

### Pennsylvania's High-Growth Jobs and Industries

EDUCATION	NURSING	SOCIAL SERVICES
BUSINESS	COMPUTER SCIENCE	ENGINEERING