

## **Healthcare Labour Protections and Opportunity Bill 2022**

A Bill for an Act to establish more protective and preventive procedures that will assist healthcare workers in attaining well-deserved optimal health, and achieving higher quality healthcare service. This Bill aims to implement procedures and policies, to ensure that the wellbeing of healthcare workers is prioritised. Such procedures shall be enforced by a new legislative body known as the Healthcare Protection Agency. This Bill highlights the necessary actions that shall be taken to promote better working conditions for healthcare workers. According to the *Policies, Standards and Guidelines* implemented by the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services, no such concept listed within this Bill is featured which further brings necessity and urgency to establishing the crucial Clauses stated within this Bill.

This Bill advocates for increasing standards in the medical working environment and will prioritise the wellbeing of healthcare workers. It intends to inaugurate and enforce a system to ensure that healthcare workers experience optimal health and increased enjoyment of life, both within and out of their workplace.

**A Bill for an Act relating to Healthcare Labour Protections and Opportunity to be enacted by the YMCA Victoria Youth Parliament;**

**PART I—Preliminary**

**Clause 1 Purpose**

The main purposes of this Act are—

- (a) To allow healthcare workers to receive appropriate rest and care before shifts;
- (b) To further advertise the importance of improving customer treatment towards healthcare workers;
- (c) To ensure that the healthcare industry does not deplete in the quantity of workers (and students preparing for this field) due to the reputation of the current treatment of healthcare workers;
- (d) To uphold the belief that all workers deserve to feel safe and cared for in their work environment and ensure that Occupational Health & Safety laws are followed through and are strictly enforced.

**Clause 2 Commencement**

This Bill shall commence upon receiving assent from the Youth Governor of Victoria.

**Clause 3 Definitions**

In this Bill—

- (a) **Healthcare workers** means a provider of healthcare treatment (including doctors, nurses, surgeons, specialists, etc.);
- (b) **Campaign** means an organised course of action to achieve a goal;
- (c) **Shift** means a set number of hours to be worked in an allocated time period;
- (d) **Hourly wage** means a monetary salary to be provided by the employer for every hour worked;
- (e) **Healthcare institutions** means an organisation that provides healthcare and related services to patients;
- (f) **Therapeutic services** are medically directed activities or treatments pertaining to a patient's mental stability and wellbeing.

**PART II—Establishment**

**Clause 4 Establishment of the Healthcare Protection Agency**

4.1 The Healthcare Protection Agency (HPA) shall be established.

4.2 The HPA shall be comprised of;

- (a) Four members from the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS);
- (b) Two youth leaders;
  - (i) Who shall be recruited annually by Victorian Student Representative Council.

4.3 The HPA shall sit under the oversight of DHHS.

4.4 The HPA shall be responsible for;

- (a) Overseeing the working conditions of healthcare workers;
- (b) Making impartial decisions when faced with approving and enforcing penalties as outlined in Clause 7.

**Clause 5 Subsidised Access to Health Services for Healthcare Workers**

- 5.1 DHHS shall provide health services to healthcare workers.
- 5.2 DHHS shall provide healthcare workers with access to therapeutic services and general practitioners (GPs) at a discounted rate.
- 5.3 Healthcare workers shall be accepted as patients at all therapeutic and GP practices when the following condition is fulfilled;
  - (a) Healthcare workers shall provide proof of identification stating their position as a healthcare worker.

**Clause 6 Implementation of Campaign for Better Treatment of Healthcare Workers**

- 6.1 DHHS shall implement a campaign in the media with the aim to encourage better treatment of healthcare workers.
- 6.2 The campaign shall;
  - (a) Communicate effective and appropriate ways to treat healthcare workers;
  - (b) Feature healthcare workers telling their stories.
- 6.3 The campaign shall be distributed in the following media outlets;
  - (a) Television;
  - (b) Radio;
  - (c) Social media, including the following platforms;
    - (i) Facebook;
    - (ii) Instagram;
    - (iii) Twitter.
- 6.4 The campaign shall have a duration of eight months.

**Clause 7 Restrictions Pertaining to Healthcare Workers' Shifts**

- 7.1 Healthcare workers shall work a maximum of 7 hours within a 24-hour period.
- 7.2 Healthcare workers shall be permitted to negotiate contracts with employers to adjust the maximum number of hours worked per 24-hour period.
- 7.3 Healthcare workers shall work a maximum of 38 hours per week.
- 7.4 Healthcare workers shall be awarded triple their hourly wage for all hours worked over 7 hours in a 24-hour period.
- 7.5 Healthcare workers shall receive a 15-minute paid break per hour of overtime worked.
- 7.6 Healthcare workers shall receive two 15-minute paid breaks per 7-hour shift.
- 7.7 These restrictions shall be enforced by the HPA wherein healthcare facilities that are non-compliant or in breach shall be penalised.

**Clause 8 Provisions Pertaining to Increased Investments in Education**

- 8.1 The HPA shall implement a medical education program in all Victorian secondary schools that shall be delivered to students in the following year levels;
  - (a) Year 7;
  - (b) Year 10.
- 8.2 The main purpose of the medical education program shall be;

- (a) To increase students' interest in pursuing careers in healthcare;
  - (b) To address the labour shortage in the healthcare sector in the long-term.
- 8.2 The HPA shall determine the content of the medical education program.
- 8.3 The HPA shall recruit medical educators to facilitate the medical education program.
- 8.4 The medical education program shall be delivered in both semesters of the school year, during school hours.
- 8.5 The medical education program shall feature the following categories of courses;
  - (a) Mandatory courses to occur at every participating school;
  - (b) Optional, supplementary courses, the inclusion of which shall be at the discretion of each school.
- 8.6 The medical education program shall run for the duration of a fortnight.