



Professions and Occupations

During the 2022 legislative session, the Colorado General Assembly considered several measures concerning professions and occupations including health care professionals, sunrise and sunset reviews, and employment and licensure.

Health Care Professionals

The General Assembly considered several bills concerning the regulation of and workforce issues related to health care professionals. [Senate Bill 22-181](#) requires the Behavioral Health Administration in the Department of Human Services to create a behavioral health care workforce plan. This would create various strategies for improvement such as internship programs, assistance with student loan repayment, and peer groups within the field. The goal is to increase and diversify the behavioral health care workforce.

The global pandemic has caused tremendous strain, particularly on health care providers. [House Bill 22-1298](#) transfers \$11,720,278 from the General Fund to the Division of Professions and Occupations Cash Fund to provide licensure and certification fee relief for nurses, nurse aids, and psychiatric technicians.

[House Bill 22-1050](#) creates two programs for international medical graduates (IMG). The IMG Assistance Program will provide services to IMGs wanting to reestablish their medical career in Colorado. The Clinical Readiness

Program will help IMGs build the skills necessary to be successful medical residents. The program will issue an industry recognized credential of clinical readiness to IMGs who successfully complete the program, which will allow the IMGs to interview for positions in a residency program.

[Senate Bill 22-058](#) creates a peer assistance program to assist dental hygienists who are experiencing physical, emotional, and psychological challenges. The program is funded by the initial licensure, reinstatement, and renewal fees for a dental hygienist's license.

The "Interstate Licensed Professional Counselors Compact" allows for licensed professional counselors to provide services in each state that is a member of this compact, including telehealth. [Senate Bill 22-077](#) permits Colorado to enter the compact.

Sunrise and Sunset Reviews

Each year the General Assembly reviews the need for the regulation of professions and various advisory committees. Sunrise reviews propose the regulation of any unregulated professional or occupational group. Meanwhile, sunset reviews are periodic reviews to ensure that regulations in place continue to serve public interest.

The General Assembly passed several bills related to the sunset hearing process that

Professions and Occupations (cont'd)

continue the regulation of health care professions.

- [House Bill 22-1213](#) continues the regulation of speech-language pathologists for eleven years and implements recommendations from the [sunset review report](#).
- [House Bill 22-1226](#) continues the regulation of massage therapists for nine years and grants sole discretion of the Division of Professions and Occupations in the Department of Regulatory Agencies (DORA) to select a licensing examination and adds additional grounds for discipline. The recommendations can be found in the [sunset review](#).
- [House Bill 22-1233](#) continues the regulation of optometry for the next eleven years. It expands the definition of the practice of optometry and requires optometrists to report themselves to the board when they are unable to practice with reasonable skill and safety. The sunset review can be found [here](#).
- [House Bill 22-1263](#) continues the regulation of acupuncturists for eleven years and makes several changes with recommendations from the [sunset review](#).

Employment and Licensure

The General Assembly considered several bills concerning employment. In an effort to increase the workforce, [House Bill 22-1383](#) allows for the Colorado Department of Human Services to expand career and technical education and vocational training programs in juvenile facilities. Additionally, the bill prohibits employers from inquiring about certain information related to an applicant's juvenile record.

[Senate Bill 22-076](#) requires DORA to dismiss anonymous complaints made against an individual with an occupational license if the complaint arises from words or actions during their time as an elected official of the state or a political subdivision of the state.

The Director of the Division of Professions and Occupations is required to appoint two electricians and two plumbers to conduct compliance checks to ensure compliance with licensing and supervisor-to-apprentice ratio requirements applicable to electricians and plumbers through [House Bill 22-1346](#).

[Senate Bill 22-219](#) begins regulating dental therapy and requires dental therapists to be licensed by the Colorado Dental Board beginning May 1, 2023. In order to become licensed, the individual must submit a written application, proof of graduation from dental school or qualified programs, and completion of the examinations required for licensure of a dental therapist.