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Press Release

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Alaska Wins \$2.9 Million Grant for Health Care Workforce Training *State awarded competitive federal grant, will expand pipeline of skilled health care workers*

ANCHORAGE: The Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DOLWD) has won a competitive federal grant to expand Registered Apprenticeship health care training in Alaska. DOLWD applied for the grant in partnership with the Southcentral Foundation and the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority. The grant will accelerate development of training programs for high demand health care occupations. The grant award was announced following a White House summit and Congressional briefing that featured Alaska as one of the leading states that uses Registered Apprenticeship.

“This grant will significantly expand Alaska’s training infrastructure in health care, which has the state’s fastest job growth,” said Commissioner Heidi Drygas. “This funding could not come at a better time, as we ramp up health care training in support of Governor Walker’s Healthy Alaska Plan.”

DOLWD has been working with employers such as Southcentral Foundation, Alaska Regional Hospital, Mat-Su Regional Medical Center, Providence Health and Services, the Department of Health and Social Services, and respective labor unions to design a Registered Apprenticeship Training Cooperative that will improve health training in Alaska. The Cooperative will expand availability of training for high demand occupations such as Operating Room Technician and Personal Care Assistant. The Cooperative is designed to meet occupational demand in the health care industry while building career ladders that help Alaska health care workers advance in their careers and earn livable wages.

Employment data from DOLWD’s Research and Analysis Division suggest that 47 of the state’s 50 fastest growing occupations are in the health care industry. Governor Walker’s Healthy Alaska Plan will add to that job growth.

[Registered Apprenticeship](#) combines on-the-job training with technical classroom instruction, and is designed to offer worker training based on the needs of employers. In Alaska, Registered Apprenticeship has long been the foundation of training in the construction industry. More recently, many large health care employers have started using Registered Apprenticeship, and the DOLWD Cooperative will expand the scale of Registered Apprenticeship programs to meet the growing need for skilled health care workers. Individuals who complete Registered Apprenticeship programs nearly triple their average annual wages.ⁱ Apprenticeship program graduates earn more than \$80,000 annually, which is 60% higher than the statewide median wage.ⁱⁱ Registered Apprenticeship programs directly contribute to higher rates of Alaska Hire and

lower rates of unemployment by increasing the supply of trained workers: 92.2% of Registered Apprenticeship graduates are employed in Alaska the year after program completion, compared to only 73.4% of those who dropped out. Both of those rates exceed the statewide average workforce participation rate of 66%.ⁱⁱⁱ The number of Registered Apprenticeship program sponsors has increased 86% since 2000, and the number of Registered Apprenticeship programs has increased 69% since 2000.^{iv}

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ⁱ Longitudinal Employment and Wage Outcomes of Registered Apprenticeship Programs, 5/2015, Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Division.

ⁱⁱ Ibid.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid.

^{iv} Longitudinal Employment and Wage Outcomes of Registered Apprenticeship Programs, 5/2015, Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Division.; Toward a Model Apprenticeship Framework: A Comparative Analysis of National Apprenticeship Systems, International Labour Organization, [1/30/2014](#).