



## OPPOSE AND VOTE “NO” ON HB 1598

### Onerous requirements for surgical technologists that threaten access to healthcare

**IHA POSITION:** IHA strongly opposes House Bill 1598, which would significantly reduce the pool of qualified surgical technologists, exacerbating current workforce shortages and ultimately limiting patient access to critical healthcare services. At a time when healthcare professionals, including surgical technologists, are critically needed, Illinois should not restrict pathways to medical careers. **IHA urges lawmakers to preserve existing standards for surgical technologists by voting against this restrictive workforce legislation.**

**BACKGROUND:** HB 1598 phases out “grow your own” healthcare workforce programs that Illinois hospitals have used to train surgical technologists and pay students as they learn, by requiring an individual to get an associate’s degree to become a surgical technologist. While many community colleges around the state offer an associate’s degree program, these programs are not producing enough individuals to meet the needs of hospitals and surgical centers for this needed position. **Currently, legitimate pathways exist to become a certified surgical technologist, such as hospital-based programs, registered apprenticeships and other accredited school programs. These will all be eliminated if HB 1598 is enacted.**

#### HOUSE BILL 1598 REDUCES PATHWAYS TO GOOD PAYING JOBS

- HB 1598 eliminates alternative pathways to certification—including hospital-based training programs, registered apprenticeships, and other accredited educational programs—and creates unnecessary barriers to good-paying healthcare jobs.
- Traditional associate’s degree programs are often inaccessible for working adults. Requiring an associate’s degree significantly increases costs and time commitments, severely limiting career opportunities and hospital training programs essential for developing surgical technologists.

#### HOUSE BILL 1598 OFFERS A SOLUTION TO A PROBLEM THAT DOESN’T EXIST

- Proponents have not provided any concrete evidence demonstrating that the proposed certification requirements would enhance patient safety or improve quality of care.
- Likewise, there is no data or research indicating that surgical technologists trained through alternative pathways deliver lower quality care or negatively impact patient outcomes.

#### HOUSE BILL 1598 THREATENS PATIENTS ACCESS TO CARE

- Only 18 community colleges in Illinois offer surgical technology programs that meet the proposed standards in HB 1598, and their graduation rates remain inadequate to fulfill hospital and surgical center workforce needs.
- States such as Oregon, Virginia, and Tennessee, which passed similar restrictive measures, experienced workforce shortages that required legislative reconsideration.
- If hospitals and surgical centers are unable to recruit candidates who meet the restrictive new standards, critical surgical positions may remain vacant, reducing surgical services and limiting patients access to care.

## VOTE “NO” ON HOUSE BILL 1598 TO PRESERVE PATHWAYS TO NEEDED SURGICAL TECHNOLOGISTS IN ILLINOIS

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