

# Ensuring Access to Patient Care

## *Whenever You Need It*

Imagine having a stroke or being injured badly in an accident. You expect to be rushed to the hospital and treated right away. You are seen in the emergency room. But what happens if the hospital doesn't have enough nurses, or doctors, or other critical personnel to help you, to save your life. Sadly, too many health care workers are leaving the field and too few are coming to take their place. It doesn't matter how many beds the hospital has if there are no trained professionals to care for you.



### ▶ WHERE WE ARE TODAY:

- There is a **current shortfall of 3,899 registered nurses in Kentucky hospitals.**
- **Staff are retiring and by 2030 one-quarter (25%) of all psychiatric nurses and nearly one-fifth (19%) of all OR nurses will have retired.**
- While nursing is often the focus, there are shortages of health care professionals all across the scope of practice.
- **Without sufficient staff hospitals will have no choice other than closing beds and reducing available services.**

### ▶ HOW CAN THIS IMPENDING LOSS OF ACCESS TO PATIENT CARE BE CORRECTED?

- There is no silver bullet but **good efforts are underway.**
- **Embrace LPN education in high school** like other states are doing.
- **Show high school students the path for great health care careers.**
- **Provide publicity for existing resources to pay for healthcare education.**
- **Emphasize science education in high school** which CPE and KCTCS identify as crucial but currently lacking.

***We will all be patients at some point and the hospital must be there when we need it. The time to ensure the care will be there is now.***