
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO DENTISTS.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that there is a severe
2 shortage of dental services in the underserved communities of
3 Hawaii, particularly with Med-QUEST and uninsured patients.
4 This growing crisis is due to geographic isolation, lack of
5 educational opportunities for dentists and their families, and
6 salaries that are up to twenty per cent lower than on the
7 mainland.

8 The legislature further finds that dental health is
9 paramount in the overall health and well-being of the citizens
10 of Hawaii and that an incentive program needs to be established
11 to maximize the availability of quality dental care in
12 underserved communities. The dental care student loan repayment
13 program will advance this purpose by enabling dentists who are
14 already licensed and experienced to fill the immediate need
15 while alleviating the huge financial burden that professional
16 education imposes on dentists.

17 The purpose of this Act is to establish a student loan
18 repayment program as an incentive for dentists who serve in



1 underserved communities and accept medicaid and uninsured
2 patients.

3 SECTION 2. Chapter 321, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
4 amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated
5 and to read as follows:

6 "§321- Dental care student loan repayment program;

7 establishment. (a) There is established within the department
8 of health a dental care student loan repayment program to be
9 administered by the director of health. The program shall
10 provide student loan repayment to dentists in exchange for
11 service in an underserved community in Hawaii as provided for in
12 subsection (b).

13 (b) Pursuant to this program, the department shall award a
14 dentist one year of educational loan repayment annually in
15 exchange for every two years that the dentist agrees to practice
16 in a state-designated dental health professional shortage area
17 and up to a maximum of three years of loan repayment; provided
18 that the dental professional:

19 (1) Is licensed to practice dentistry under chapter 448;
20 and

21 (2) Meets at least one of the following criteria:

- 1 (A) The dental professional is employed by a
2 federally qualified health center; or
- 3 (B) The dental professional owns or is employed by a
4 practice that is open to new clients enrolled in
5 the Hawaii medicaid program and offers dental
6 services to the uninsured on a sliding fee scale
7 or on a pro bono basis and forty per cent of the
8 clients served are medicaid eligible or
9 uninsured.
- 10 (c) There shall be established a special account within
11 the state treasury to be expended by the department of health
12 for the purposes of the dental care student loan repayment
13 program.
- 14 (d) The department of health shall adopt rules in
15 accordance with chapter 91 to effectuate the purpose of this
16 section. The rules shall address the following:
- 17 (1) Qualifications of applicants;
18 (2) Application procedures;
19 (3) The amount of student loan repayment available each
20 year;

- 1 (4) Criteria for fulfilling an applicant's obligation for
- 2 providing dental care in exchange for student loan
- 3 repayment;
- 4 (5) The limitation, suspension, or revocation of
- 5 repayments; and
- 6 (6) Sanctions for a violation of this section or any rule
- 7 adopted pursuant to this section."

8 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general

9 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$, or so

10 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2006-2007, to

11 be deposited into the special account established under section

12 2 of this Act, for the purposes of this Act.

13 SECTION 4. The sum appropriated shall be expended by the

14 department of health for the purposes of this Act.

15 SECTION 5. New statutory material is underscored.

16 SECTION 6. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2006.

Report Title:

Dentists; Student Loan Repayment Program; Incentive

Description:

Establishes a dental care student loan repayment program as an incentive for dentists who serve in underserved communities and accept Med-QUEST and uninsured patients. (SD1)

