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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO RURAL PRIMARY HEALTH CARE TRAINING.

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

1           SECTION 1. The legislature recognizes that to protect the  
2 health of Hawaii's citizens and control future healthcare costs,  
3 action must be taken to address the severe primary care health  
4 workforce shortage in the rural areas of our State. With the  
5 exception of a few areas on the island of Oahu, the counties of  
6 our state are either designated by the federal government as  
7 medically underserved areas, health professional shortage areas,  
8 or as having medically underserved populations.

9           Family physicians are well suited to rural health care  
10 because of the broad scope of their practice that encompasses  
11 inpatient, outpatient, and nursing home settings, and addresses  
12 acute, chronic, and preventive health across the lifecycle.  
13 Many family physicians include in their practices, maternity  
14 care, family planning, and mental health services. However, of  
15 the approximately three thousand five hundred licensed  
16 physicians in Hawaii, there are only one hundred ten family  
17 physicians practicing on the neighbor islands.



1 As Hawaii's population ages, increasing demands will be  
2 placed on our already fragile, rural healthcare system. The  
3 "graying" of the patient population will also be accompanied by  
4 the aging of the existing healthcare workforce and the  
5 retirement of our rural physicians.

6 This Act addresses the rural primary health care shortage  
7 by creating a pipeline that places primary care physicians who  
8 are in the final years of their training, in the underserved  
9 areas of our State. This approach is predicated on the fact  
10 that physicians tend to remain and practice where they train.  
11 The Act expands the family medicine residency program sponsored  
12 by the John A. Burns school of medicine and Wahiawa general  
13 hospital, by adding two new rural training sites and doubling  
14 from eighteen to thirty-six, the number of family medicine  
15 resident physicians being trained. The final two years of  
16 clinical training in this program will be completed at rural  
17 training sites in Hilo, Hawaii Island and Lihue, Kauai,  
18 providing an expanded and ongoing primary care physician supply  
19 to the State.

20 The partial costs of starting the two new academic clinical  
21 practices on the neighbor islands total \$870,000 in fiscal year  
22 2008 and \$1,890,000 in fiscal year 2009. They include the costs



1 of eight faculty physician salaries, clinic infrastructure  
2 improvements, transportation, and electronic health records.  
3 These components are the minimum critical elements necessary for  
4 American college of graduate medical education accreditation.  
5 Once the new academic clinical practices are accredited, the  
6 federal centers for medicare and medicaid services (CMS) will  
7 establish a resident allotment or "cap" for each hospital site  
8 and federal graduate medical education funds will become  
9 available to cover residents' salaries and training expenses.

10 The sustainability of this model will be accomplished  
11 through a combination of CMS funding, clinical revenue, and  
12 support from rural hospital and community health center partners  
13 similar to programs adopted successfully in other rural states  
14 such as Washington and Wisconsin. To guarantee a primary care  
15 physician workforce, states such as Texas and Washington  
16 presently fund portions of their family medicine residency  
17 programs through legislative line items.

18 The purpose of this Act is to improve healthcare access for  
19 the people of Hawaii by establishing a statewide rural training  
20 model that produces a robust, well trained primary healthcare  
21 workforce, and places family physicians in rural areas.



1 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general  
2 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ , or so  
3 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2007-2008 and  
4 \$ , or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal  
5 year 2008-2009 to develop a statewide rural training model to  
6 provide a pipeline of well trained family physicians to rural  
7 areas, and improve healthcare access for the people of Hawaii.

8 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the John A.  
9 Burns school of medicine, University of Hawaii at Manoa for the  
10 purposes of this Act.

11 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2007.



**Report Title:**

Primary Health Care Services; Rural Areas

**Description:**

Appropriates funds to develop a statewide rural training model to provide a pipeline of well trained family physicians to improve health care access and meet the future health needs of the people of Hawaii. (SD1)

