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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO LOAN REPAYMENT FOR HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS.

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

1           SECTION 1. The legislature finds that many Hawaii  
2 residents are unable to obtain timely and appropriate health  
3 care due to shortages of primary health care providers in the  
4 State. These shortages not only threaten individual health but  
5 also cumulatively affect the State's health care costs. Areas  
6 of Hawaii, which have been designated by the federal government  
7 as medically underserved areas, have been most significantly  
8 affected by shortages of primary and behavioral health care  
9 providers such as physicians, nurse practitioners, physician  
10 assistants, and psychologists. Social workers, marriage and  
11 family therapists, and nurses are also urgently needed.

12           In many cases, the increasingly high cost of education for  
13 health care professionals binds graduates to a career path that  
14 provides sufficient income to repay often exorbitant student  
15 loans over \$500,000. These career paths most frequently lead to  
16 professional practice in highly specialized areas of care in  
17 urban areas rather than in general practice on the neighbor



1 islands or in rural areas, where the need is greatest. The  
2 legislature further finds that counties in the United States  
3 with robust primary health care systems have lower costs and  
4 improved patient outcomes. Recognizing this correlation, many  
5 states have made the policy decision to dedicate public funds to  
6 the development of a strong primary health care workforce.

7 The only loan repayment program currently available in the  
8 State is administered by the John A. Burns school of medicine at  
9 the University of Hawaii at Manoa. This program leverages  
10 private donations to access matching federal funds through the  
11 State Loan Repayment Program of the National Health Service  
12 Corps of the Department of Health and Human Services. Since  
13 September 1, 2012, the loan repayment program has supported  
14 forty-six recipients in exchange for work in underserved  
15 geographic and practice areas in Hawaii. Currently, health care  
16 professionals who have benefited from the loan repayment program  
17 serve the communities of Waianae, Hilo, and Wailuku; at health  
18 clinics in Kalihi-Palama Health Center, Queen Emma Clinic, and  
19 Waikiki Health Center; and in public institutional settings at  
20 the Federal Detention Center in Honolulu and the Halawa  
21 correctional facility.



1           The legislature recognizes the considerable public outcomes  
2 achieved from the general funds allocated in each year of the  
3 2017-2019 biennium, and fiscal year 2019-2020, to educate,  
4 train, and facilitate health care professionals to work in  
5 underserved areas. At this time, the loan repayment program  
6 supports twenty-four providers in Hawaii.

7           The purpose of this Act is to appropriate funds for fiscal  
8 year 2020-2021 to the department of health to fund the health  
9 care provider loan repayment program administered through the  
10 John A. Burns school of medicine to provide loan repayment for  
11 physicians, physician assistants, psychologists, nurse  
12 practitioners, social workers, marriage and family therapists,  
13 and nurses who agree to work in a federally-designated health  
14 professional shortage area or in a geographic area of Hawaii  
15 found to be underserved.

16           SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general  
17 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$500,000 or so much  
18 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2020-2021 for the  
19 health care provider loan repayment program; provided that no  
20 funds shall be released unless matched on a dollar-for-dollar  
21 basis by funds from a private or another public source.



1 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of  
2 health in coordination with the John A. Burns school of medicine  
3 at the University of Hawaii at Manoa for the purposes of this  
4 Act.

5 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2020.  
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# H.B. NO. 2254

**Report Title:**

Loan Repayment; Health Care Professionals; Matching Funds;  
Appropriation

**Description:**

Appropriates funds for fiscal year 2020-2021 for the Health Care Provider Loan Repayment Program administered through the John A. Burns School of Medicine of the University of Hawaii at Manoa; provided that the funds are matched on a dollar-to-dollar basis by a private or another public source.

*The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.*

