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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 and behavioral health care  
4 professionals in the State. These shortages not only threaten  
5 individual health, but also cumulatively affect the State's  
6 health care costs. Areas of Hawaii that have been designated by  
7 the federal government as medically underserved have been most  
8 significantly affected by shortages of primary and behavioral  
9 health care professionals, such as physicians, nurse  
10 practitioners, physician assistants, and psychologists. Social  
11 workers, marriage and family therapists, and nurses are also  
12 urgently needed in these areas.

13           In many cases, the increasingly high cost of education for  
14 health care professionals binds graduates to a career path that  
15 provides sufficient income to repay often exorbitant student  
16 loans. These career paths most frequently lead to professional  
17 practice in highly specialized fields of care in urban areas



1 rather than in general practice on the neighbor islands or in  
2 remote areas where the need is greatest. Furthermore, the  
3 counties in the United States with robust primary health care  
4 systems have lower costs and improved patient outcomes.  
5 Recognizing this correlation, many states have made the policy  
6 decision to dedicate public funds to the development of a strong  
7 primary health care workforce.

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



1 federal detention center in Honolulu and the Halawa correctional  
2 facility.

3 The legislature recognizes the considerable positive public  
4 outcomes achieved from the general funds allocated in each year  
5 of the 2017-2018 biennium, as well as the fiscal year 2019-2020,  
6 to educate, train, and facilitate health care professionals to  
7 work in underserved areas. At this time, the loan repayment  
8 program supports twenty-four providers in Hawaii.

9 The purpose of this Act is to appropriate funds to the  
10 department of health to fund the health care provider loan  
11 repayment program administered through the John A. Burns school  
12 of medicine at the University of Hawaii at Manoa to provide loan  
13 repayment for physicians, physician assistants, psychologists,  
14 nurse practitioners, social workers, marriage and family  
15 therapists, and registered nurses who agree to work in an  
16 underserved geographic area of Hawaii.

17 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general  
18 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so  
19 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2020-2021 for  
20 the health care provider loan repayment program; provided that



1 no funds shall be released unless matched on a dollar-for-dollar  
2 basis by funds from a private or another public source.

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

7 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 3000.



**Report Title:**

Health Care Provider Loan Repayment Program; Department of Health; John A. Burns School of Medicine; Appropriation

**Description:**

Appropriates funds for the health care provider loan repayment program. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD1)

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