
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 providers 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 providers, such as physicians, nurse practitioners,
10 physician assistants, and psychologists. Social workers,
11 marriage and family therapists, and nurses are also urgently
12 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. Further, the counties
3 in the United States with robust primary health care systems
4 have lower costs and improved patient outcomes. Recognizing
5 this correlation, many states have made the policy decision to
6 dedicate public funds to the development of a strong primary
7 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 Hawaii rural health care
11 provider loan repayment program administered through the
12 university of Hawaii John A. Burns school of medicine to provide
13 loan repayment for physicians, physician assistants,
14 psychologists, nurse practitioners, social workers, marriage and
15 family 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 much
19 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2020-2021 for the
20 Hawaii rural health care provider loan repayment program;
21 provided that no funds shall be released unless matched on a



1 dollar-for-dollar basis by funds from a private or another
2 public source.

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

6 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2050.



Report Title:

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

Description:

Appropriates funds for the Hawaii rural health care provider loan repayment program. Effective 7/1/2050. (SD1)

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