
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. Many
13 family physicians include in their practices, maternity care,
14 family planning, and mental health services. However, of the
15 approximately three thousand five hundred licensed physicians in
16 Hawaii, there are only one hundred ten family physicians
17 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 retirement
5 of our rural physicians.

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

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



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

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

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

21 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general
22 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$870,000 or so much



1 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2007-2008 and
 2 \$1,890,000 or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal
 3 year 2008-2009 to develop a statewide rural training model to
 4 provide a pipeline of well trained family physicians to rural
 5 areas, and improve healthcare access for the people of Hawaii.

6 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the Department of
 7 Health for the purposes of this Act.

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

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INTRODUCED BY: Josh Muen MD
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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.

