
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 threaten individual health and
5 cumulatively affect the State's health care costs. The State's
6 rural areas, which have been designated by the federal
7 government as medically underserved areas, have been most
8 significantly affected by shortages of primary and behavioral
9 health care providers.

10 The increasingly high cost of education for health care
11 professionals binds graduates to a career path focused on
12 pursuing an income that makes it possible to repay often
13 exorbitant student loans. These career paths most often lead to
14 professional practice in highly specialized areas of care in
15 urban areas and not to general practice on neighbor islands or
16 in rural areas where the need is greatest. The legislature
17 finds that counties in the United States with robust primary
18 health care systems have lower costs and improved patient



1 outcomes. Recognizing this relationship, many states have made
2 the policy decision to dedicate public funds to the development
3 of a strong primary health care workforce.

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

20 The purpose of this Act is to appropriate funds to the
21 department of health to fund the Hawaii rural health care



1 provider loan repayment program administered through the John A.
2 Burns school of medicine to provide loan repayment for
3 physicians, physician assistants, and nurse practitioners who
4 agree to work in a federally-designated health professional
5 shortage area or an area of Hawaii found to be underserved.

6 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general
7 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
8 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2017-2018 for
9 the Hawaii rural health care provider loan repayment program;
10 provided that no funds shall be expended unless matched on a
11 dollar-for-dollar basis by funds from a private or other public
12 source.

13 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of
14 health in coordination with the John A. Burns school of medicine
15 of the University of Hawaii at Manoa for the purposes of this
16 Act.

17 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2017.

18



Report Title:

Health Care Professionals; Loan Repayment; Appropriation

Description:

Makes an appropriation for the Hawaii rural health care provider loan repayment program administered through the John A. Burns School of Medicine. (SD1)

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