
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO HEALTH.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that Act 187, Session
2 Laws of Hawaii 2012, established the Hawaii health corps program
3 as a means of addressing the State's longstanding health care
4 provider shortage. This program is aimed at increasing Hawaii
5 residents' ability to obtain timely medical services by
6 incentivizing family physicians, physician assistants, and nurse
7 practitioners to provide medical services in underserved and
8 rural areas in the State in return for repayment of loans.

9 The legislature further finds that because of the impact of
10 the "SARS-CoV-2" virus, there is an increased need across the
11 State for the services provided by social workers and
12 psychologists. However, under the current Hawaii health corps
13 program, social workers and psychologists are ineligible to
14 participate.

15 The purpose of this Act is to:

16 (1) Establish the Hawaii rural mental health corps program
17 for eligible social workers and psychologists;



- 1 (2) Create the Hawaii rural mental health care provider
- 2 repayment program and make the department of health
- 3 responsible for administration of the program; and
- 4 (3) Appropriate funds for the Hawaii rural mental health
- 5 care provider repayment program.

6 SECTION 2. Chapter 309H, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
 7 amended by adding a new part to be appropriately designated and
 8 to read as follows:

9 "PART III. HAWAII MENTAL HEALTH CORPS

10 §309H-A Hawaii rural mental health corps program;

11 **established.** (a) There is established the Hawaii rural mental
 12 health corps program to encourage psychologists and social
 13 workers to serve in counties having a shortage of psychologists
 14 and social workers, with priority given to a rural area county.

15 (b) The Hawaii rural mental health corps program shall be
 16 administered by the University of Hawaii at Manoa college of
 17 social sciences and the University of Hawaii at Manoa Thompson
 18 school of social work and public health. In administering the
 19 program, the University of Hawaii at Manoa college of social
 20 sciences and University of Hawaii at Manoa Thompson school of
 21 social work and public health shall:



- 1 (1) Adopt rules and develop guidelines to administer the
2 program;
- 3 (2) Identify and designate areas of the counties where
4 there is a shortage of psychologists and social
5 workers;
- 6 (3) Establish criteria for the selection of psychologists
7 by the University of Hawaii at Manoa college of social
8 sciences and of social workers by the University of
9 Hawaii at Manoa Thompson school of social work and
10 public health to participate in the Hawaii rural
11 mental health care provider loan repayment program
12 established pursuant to section 309H-B;
- 13 (4) Define and determine compliance with the service
14 commitments of the Hawaii rural mental health care
15 provider loan repayment program;
- 16 (5) In conjunction with the department of health, collect
17 and manage reimbursements from participants who do not
18 meet their service commitments under the Hawaii rural
19 mental health care provider loan repayment program;
- 20 (6) Publicize the program, particularly to maximize
21 participation by individuals who live in areas of a



1 county where there is a shortage of psychologists and
2 social workers;

3 (7) In conjunction with the department of health, solicit
4 and accept grants and donations from public and
5 private sources for the Hawaii rural mental health
6 care provider loan repayment program, including
7 maximizing the use of federal matching funds; and

8 (8) Establish criteria and procedures for calling Hawaii
9 rural mental health corps program participants into
10 service during an emergency or disaster.

11 **§309H-B Hawaii rural mental health care provider loan**
12 **repayment program.** (a) There is created within the Hawaii
13 rural mental health corps program the Hawaii rural mental health
14 care provider loan repayment program to be administered by the
15 department of health in partnership with a lending financial
16 institution whose operations are principally conducted in
17 Hawaii. The Hawaii rural mental health care provider loan
18 repayment program shall provide loan repayments to eligible
19 psychologists and social workers who make the service commitment
20 under subsection (b). The department of health shall work with
21 the University of Hawaii at Manoa college of social sciences and



1 University of Hawaii at Manoa Thompson school of social work and
2 public health to identify loan payment amounts and loan
3 repayment program recipients. The department of health shall
4 make loan repayments directly to the financial institution under
5 subsection (b) to offset the loan repayment for which the Hawaii
6 rural mental health care provider loan repayment program
7 recipient would otherwise be liable. Loan repayments shall
8 commence upon the commencement of loan repayments by the Hawaii
9 rural mental health care provider loan repayment program
10 recipient to the lending financial institution. The department
11 of health shall prioritize loan repayments in accordance with
12 the greatest specialty shortages for the particular county.

13 (b) The Hawaii rural mental health care provider loan
14 repayment program shall provide loan repayments on behalf of
15 licensed psychologists and social workers who agree to serve for
16 five consecutive years as a psychologist or social worker in a
17 county having a shortage of psychologists and social workers,
18 with priority given to a rural area of that particular county;
19 provided that psychologists or social workers shall have
20 graduated with a degree in psychology or social work from a duly
21 accredited university or college within the United States, as



1 applicable; provided further that preference shall be given to
2 graduates of the University of Hawaii at Manoa college of social
3 sciences or University of Hawaii at Manoa Thompson school of
4 social work and public health, as applicable.

5 (c) Eligible participants in the Hawaii rural mental
6 health care provider loan repayment program shall be determined
7 by the University of Hawaii at Manoa college of social sciences
8 and University of Hawaii at Manoa Thompson school of social work
9 and public health on a competitive basis and in accordance with
10 subsection (b).

11 (d) If a Hawaii rural mental health care provider loan
12 repayment program participant fails to satisfy the recipient's
13 service commitment under subsection (b), the Hawaii rural mental
14 health care provider loan repayment program participant shall be
15 liable for the repayment of the outstanding balance of the loan
16 to the lending financial institution under subsection (b). In
17 addition, the department of health may seek reimbursement for
18 any loan repayment made by the department of health on behalf of
19 the Hawaii rural mental health care provider loan repayment
20 program participant.



1 (e) In accordance with chapter 103D, the department of
2 health may enter into written contracts with collection agencies
3 to collect delinquent reimbursements of loan repayments. All
4 payments collected, exclusive of a collection agency's
5 commissions, shall revert and be credited to the general fund.
6 A collection agency that enters into a written contract with the
7 department of health to collect delinquent reimbursements of
8 loan repayments pursuant to this section may collect a
9 commission from the debtor in accordance with the terms of, and
10 up to the amounts authorized in, the written contract.

11 **§309H-C Hawaii health corps first responder service**
12 **obligation.** If an emergency or disaster proclaimed under
13 chapter 127A occurs, psychologists and social workers
14 participating in the Hawaii rural mental health corps program
15 may be ordered into service by the governor as first responders
16 to serve in areas of the State and in a capacity determined by
17 the director of health.

18 **§309H-D Rules.** The University of Hawaii at Manoa college
19 of social sciences and the University of Hawaii at Manoa
20 Thompson school of social work and public health shall adopt
21 rules to administer the Hawaii rural mental health corps program



1 and the department of health shall adopt rules to administer the
2 Hawaii rural mental health care provider loan repayment program.
3 The rules shall be adopted pursuant to chapter 91, but shall be
4 exempt from public notice and public hearing requirements."

5 SECTION 3. Chapter 309H, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
6 amended as follows:

7 1. By amending its title to read:

8 "[]CHAPTER 309H[]
9 HAWAII HEALTH CORPS AND HAWAII MENTAL HEALTH CORPS"

10 2. By designating section 309H-1 as part I and inserting
11 a title before section 309H-1 to read:

12 "PART I. GENERAL PROVISIONS"

13 3. By designating sections 309H-2 to 309H-5 as part II and
14 inserting a title before section 309H-2 to read:

15 "PART II. HAWAII HEALTH CORPS"

16 SECTION 4. Section 309H-1, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
17 amended by adding two new definitions to be appropriately
18 inserted and to read as follows:

19 "Psychologist" means a person licensed as a psychologist
20 under chapter 465.



1 "Social worker" means a person licensed as a social worker
2 under chapter 467E."

3 SECTION 5. There is appropriated out of the general
4 revenues of the State the sum of \$ or so much thereof
5 as may be necessary for fiscal year 2022-2023 for the purposes
6 of the Hawaii rural mental health care provider loan repayment
7 program.

8 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of
9 health for the purposes of this Act.

10 SECTION 6. In codifying the new sections added by section
11 2 of this Act, the revisor of statutes shall substitute
12 appropriate section numbers for the letters used in designating
13 the new sections in this Act.

14 SECTION 7. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed
15 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

16 SECTION 8. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2060.

17



H.B. NO. 1795
H.D. 1

Report Title:

Hawaii Rural Mental Health Corps Program; Hawaii Rural Mental Health Care Provider Loan Repayment Program; Psychologists; Social Workers; Appropriation

Description:

Creates the Hawaii rural mental health corps program and Hawaii rural mental health care provider loan repayment program to encourage psychologists and social workers to serve in counties having a shortage of psychologists and social workers. Makes the department of health responsible for administering the Hawaii rural mental health care provider loan repayment program. Appropriates funds. Effective 7/1/2060. (HD1)

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

