

JAN 23 2025

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO LOAN REPAYMENT FOR HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that a persistent
2 workforce shortage in the health care industry has created
3 difficulties for patients trying to access care, including
4 specialized care such as behavioral health services. One of the
5 reasons that providers often cite for the difficulty of
6 practicing in Hawaii is financial hardship, with the high cost
7 of living frequently driving providers to leave the State.

8 The legislature further finds that in 2023, the legislature
9 appropriated a total of \$30,000,000 over fiscal years 2024 and
10 2025 to fund the healthcare education loan repayment program,
11 which assists health care professionals in Hawaii in repaying
12 their health care educational loans in exchange for medical
13 service in Hawaii. By all accounts, the program has been
14 extremely successful, helping to improve the lives of health
15 care professionals in the State and making it easier for them to
16 remain and practice in Hawaii.



1 The legislature also finds that eight hundred ninety
2 residents were assisted by the healthcare education loan
3 repayment program, which allocated nearly \$13,000,000 in 2023.
4 Of the eight hundred ninety recipients, two hundred thirty-eight
5 were primary care providers, and two hundred fifty were
6 behavioral health specialists. The categories of health care
7 providers who were awarded loan repayment assistance are diverse
8 and include case managers, certified nurse assistants, social
9 workers, registered nurses, and physicians.

10 In addition, the legislature finds that while the
11 healthcare education loan repayment program has significantly
12 benefited those who received loan repayment assistance, there
13 are still large numbers of health care providers who have not
14 yet received relief, including more than one thousand three
15 hundred who are currently on the waitlist. The legislature
16 additionally finds that it would be in the best interest of the
17 State to continue to fund this transformative program to help
18 address continuing shortages in the health care industry.

19 Therefore, the purpose of this Act is to appropriate funds
20 to the healthcare education loan repayment program to continue



1 to provide loan repayment assistance to health care workers in
2 Hawaii.

3 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general
4 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$15,000,000 or so
5 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 and
6 the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal
7 year 2026-2027 for the healthcare education loan repayment
8 program.

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

11 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

12

INTRODUCED BY: _____



S.B. NO. 1626

Report Title:

Healthcare Education Loan Repayment Program; Appropriation

Description:

Appropriates funds for the Healthcare Education Loan Repayment Program.

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

