## 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 since its implementation, 2 eight hundred ninety residents have been assisted by the 3 healthcare education loan repayment program, which allocated 4 nearly \$13,000,000 in 2023. Of the eight hundred ninety 5 recipients, two hundred thirty-eight were primary care 6 providers, and two hundred fifty were behavioral health 7 specialists. The categories of health care providers who were 8 awarded loan repayment assistance are diverse and include case 9 managers, certified nurse assistants, social workers, registered 10 nurses, and physicians. 11 In addition, the legislature finds that while the 12 healthcare education loan repayment program has significantly 13 benefited those who received loan repayment assistance, there 14 are still large numbers of health care providers who have not yet received relief, including more than one thousand three 15 16 hundred who are currently on the waitlist. The legislature 17 additionally finds that it would be in the best interest of the 18 State to continue to fund this transformative program to help address continuing shortages in the health care industry. 19 20 Therefore, the purpose of this Act is to appropriate funds 21 to the healthcare education loan repayment program to continue

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- 1 to provide loan repayment assistance to health care workers in
- 2 Hawaii and incentivize service and healthcare providers to
- 3 practice in Hawaii.
- 4 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general
- 5 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
- 6 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 and
- 7 the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal
- 8 year 2026-2027 for the healthcare education loan repayment
- 9 program; provided that to qualify for a loan repayment using
- 10 funds appropriated in this Act, an applicant for loan repayment
- 11 assistance shall commit to not less than two years of full-time
- 12 service in the State.
- 13 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department
- 14 of health for the purposes of this Act.
- 15 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 3000.

### Report Title:

Healthcare Education Loan Repayment Program; Appropriation

### Description:

Appropriates funds for the Healthcare Education Loan Repayment Program. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD1)

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