

JAN 21 2026

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO THE HEALTHCARE EDUCATION LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM.

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 healthcare industry has created
3 difficulties for patients in accessing care, including
4 specialized care such as behavioral health services. One reason
5 providers often cite for the difficulty of practicing in Hawaii
6 is financial hardship, with the high cost of living frequently
7 driving providers to leave the State.

8 The legislature further finds that, for fiscal years 2024
9 and 2025, the legislature appropriated a total of \$30,000,000 to
10 fund the healthcare education loan repayment program. This
11 program supports healthcare professionals across most fields of
12 practice in Hawaii by helping them repay their educational loans
13 in exchange for providing healthcare services in the state. For
14 fiscal years 2026 and 2027, the legislature appropriated an
15 additional \$30,000,000 to continue this support. The healthcare
16 education loan repayment program has been successful in
17 improving the lives of healthcare professionals in the State and



1 making it easier for these professionals to remain and practice
2 in Hawaii.

3 The legislature also finds that, since the inception of the
4 healthcare education loan repayment program, nine hundred
5 twenty-eight resident healthcare professionals have been
6 assisted by the program. The average amount of indebtedness for
7 certain disciplines who were awarded ranges from \$179,400
8 (physicians), \$93,500 (advanced practice registered nurses),
9 \$138,400 (physician assistants), \$170,600 (psychologists),
10 \$41,300 (nurses), and \$94,600 (other healthcare professionals).
11 The average loan repayment amount for all recipients to date is
12 \$49,000. All participants in the healthcare education loan
13 repayment program are required to commit to remaining in Hawaii
14 for two years to work within their profession, regardless of the
15 amount of assistance they receive through the program.

16 The legislature believes that establishing a sliding scale
17 of work commitments, based on the amount of loan repayment
18 assistance participants receive, is in the best interest of the
19 State. Healthcare professionals who receive greater loan
20 repayment assistance should be required to serve for a longer
21 period in Hawaii, thereby promoting continuity of care for



1 residents and enabling providers to better understand and
2 address community needs.

3 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to establish
4 minimum service requirements for participants in the healthcare
5 education loan repayment program receiving new awards on or
6 after July 1, 2027, with the duration of required service
7 determined by the total amount of loan repayment assistance
8 received.

9 SECTION 2. (a) Any healthcare professional who
10 participates in the healthcare education loan repayment program
11 shall be required to remain and practice within their licensed
12 profession in the State for a minimum period as follows:

13 (1) No less than two years for healthcare professionals
14 who receive total loan repayment assistance in an
15 amount between \$1,000 and \$50,000; and
16 (2) No less than three years for healthcare professionals
17 who receive total loan repayment assistance in an
18 amount of \$50,001 and above.

19 (b) For the purposes of this section:

20 "Healthcare education loan repayment program" means the
21 program established and funded by the State to provide financial



1 assistance to healthcare professionals for repayment of
2 educational loans incurred in pursuit of a healthcare degree or
3 credential, in exchange for a commitment to practice in Hawaii
4 for a specified period.

5 "Healthcare professional" means an individual who is
6 licensed, certified, or otherwise authorized under the laws of
7 the State to provide healthcare services, including but not
8 limited to physicians, physician assistants, advanced practice
9 registered nurses, nurses, psychologists, and other allied
10 health care providers.

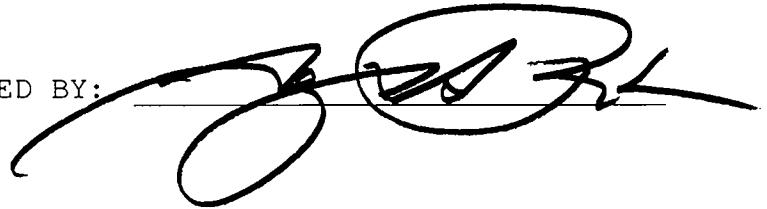
11 "Licensed profession" means the healthcare occupation or
12 field in which a healthcare professional is authorized to
13 practice under the laws and regulations of the State.

14 "Loan repayment" means funds provided to a healthcare
15 professional under the healthcare education loan repayment
16 program for the purpose of repaying outstanding educational
17 loans related to their health care training.

18 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2027.

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INTRODUCED BY:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "SENATOR BRIAN K. KEALOHA". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "B" at the beginning.

S.B. NO. 2409

Report Title:

Healthcare Education Loan Repayment Program; Healthcare Professionals; Minimum Service Requirements

Description:

Requires a participant in the Healthcare Education Loan Repayment Program to remain and work in the State for a certain number of years based on the amount of financial assistance received.

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

