THE SENATE
THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE, 2025
STATE OF HAWAII

S.B. NO. 299 S.D. 2

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO LOAN REPAYMENT FOR HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS.

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

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

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

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

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

Therefore, the purpose of this Act is to appropriate funds to the healthcare education loan repayment program to continue to provide loan repayment assistance to health care workers in

Hawaii and incentivize service and healthcare providers to practice in Hawaii.

SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of $ or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 and the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2026-2027 for the healthcare education loan repayment program; provided that to qualify for a loan repayment using funds appropriated in this Act, an applicant for loan repayment assistance shall commit to not less than years of full-time service in the State.

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

SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on December 31, 2050.

S.B. NO. 299 S.D. 2

Report Title:
Healthcare Education Loan Repayment Program; Appropriations

Description:
Appropriates funds for the Healthcare Education Loan Repayment Program. Effective 12/31/2050. (SD2)

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