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# 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:

4 (1) Formally codify the healthcare education loan  
5 repayment program; and

6 (2) Establish minimum service requirements for  
7 participants in the healthcare education loan  
8 repayment program receiving new awards on or after  
9 July 1, 2027, with the duration of required service  
10 determined by the total amount of loan repayment  
11 assistance received.

12 SECTION 2. Chapter 304A, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
13 amended by adding a new section to part IV, subpart M, to be  
14 appropriately designated and to read as follows:

15 **"§304A- Healthcare education loan repayment program;**  
16 **established.** (a) There is established the healthcare education  
17 loan repayment program within the university of Hawaii John A.  
18 Burns school of medicine.

19 (b) The purpose of the program shall be to provide  
20 financial assistance to healthcare professionals licensed, or  
21 otherwise certified, to practice in and provide care to patients



1 in the State, for loan repayment, in exchange for a commitment  
2 to practice in certain areas of the State for a specified period  
3 pursuant to rules adopted by the university of Hawaii John A.  
4 Burns school of medicine.

5 (c) Any healthcare professional who participates in the  
6 healthcare education loan repayment program by receiving a new  
7 award on or after July 1, 2027, shall be required to remain and  
8 practice within their licensed profession in the State for a  
9 minimum period as follows:

10 (1) No less than two years for healthcare professionals  
11 who receive total loan repayment assistance in an  
12 amount between \$1,000 and \$50,000; and

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

16 (d) The university of Hawaii John A. Burns school of  
17 medicine shall develop program requirements and rules to  
18 administer the program.

19 (e) For the purposes of this section:

20 "Healthcare professional" means an individual who is  
21 licensed, certified, or otherwise authorized under the laws of



1 the State to provide healthcare services, including but not  
2 limited to physicians, physician assistants, advanced practice  
3 registered nurses, nurses, psychologists, dentists, and other  
4 allied health care providers.

5 "Licensed profession" means the healthcare occupation or  
6 field in which a healthcare professional is licensed, certified,  
7 or otherwise authorized to practice under the laws and  
8 regulations of the State.

9 "Loan repayment" means funds provided to a healthcare  
10 professional under the healthcare education loan repayment  
11 program for the purpose of repaying outstanding educational  
12 loans related to their health care training."

13 SECTION 3. This Act does not affect rights and duties that  
14 matured, penalties that were incurred, and proceedings that were  
15 begun before its effective date.

16 SECTION 4. New statutory material is underscored.

17 SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect on July 31, 2055.



**Report Title:**

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

**Description:**

Formally codifies the Healthcare Education Loan Repayment Program. Requires a participant in the Healthcare Education Loan Repayment Program who receives a new award on or after July 1, 2027, to remain and work in the State for a certain number of years based on the amount of financial assistance received. Effective 7/31/2055. (SD1)

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

