

ACT 347

H.B. NO. 1363

A Bill for an Act Relating to Medicine.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Hawaii:

SECTION 1. Like the rest of the rural United States, the rural areas and the neighbor islands of our State are having great difficulties meeting the basic medical needs of their residents. The problem is especially critical in east Hawaii on the Big Island, which was judged in a recent study to be short of as many as eighteen primary care physicians.

Unfortunately, the problem is steadily worsening. While the physician population in rural areas is decreasing, the general population in many of these areas is increasing. East Hawaii is a case in point. More people have moved to the area to enjoy the lower cost of living and the higher quality of life. But physicians prefer to live in urban areas, such as Honolulu, where they are closer to the financial and cultural core, and closer, as well, to their academic and professional contacts.

The result, in practical terms, is that health care professionals living in east Hawaii are spread very thin and cannot serve all of those who need care. Patients, as a consequence, are forced to fly to Honolulu or go to the emergency room at Hilo hospital for basic medical care. Both of these alternatives are expensive, and there is understandable concern that the primary care patient load takes valuable emergency staff and resources at Hilo hospital away from true emergencies.

Under the foregoing circumstances, the health and welfare of the residents of east Hawaii clearly require that strategies for the recruitment and retention of primary care professionals for the area be developed and implemented immediately.

The legislature is aware that health care professionals are more likely to remain and practice in the community where they received their professional training. Experience in a rural setting helps to overcome some of the reluctance of physicians to practice in rural communities. Additionally, the presence of professional training opportunities in a rural community also generates an academic atmosphere which benefits community and physicians alike, and improves both the quality and quantity of services delivered.

The purposes of this Act are to establish:

- (1) A family practice residency program in the school of medicine of the University of Hawaii with a curriculum that includes opportunities for participating residents to train in an accredited training site at Hilo hospital;
- (2) A two-year demonstration project to provide training to health care graduates and students, including medical and nursing graduates and students, at the Hilo hospital training site; and
- (3) A family practice ambulatory health center at the "old" Hilo hospital which shall serve as a training site for the foregoing program and demonstration project.

SECTION 2. Chapter 304, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated and to read as follows:

"§304- Family practice residency program; established. (a) The school of medicine of the University of Hawaii shall develop an accredited family practice residency program with a curriculum that includes opportunities for residents to participate in residency training at designated accredited training sites in

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rural and medically under-served communities in the State. In developing the program, the following shall be considered:

- (1) The use of compensated and volunteer faculty, including physicians residing in the training community, to instruct and supervise participants in the program;
- (2) The provision of faculty development training for community physicians assisting in a voluntary capacity;
- (3) The provision of inpatient, outpatient, and emergency room training;
- (4) The coordination of patient care with ancillary care services such as occupational therapy, physical therapy, respiratory therapy, and social services; and
- (5) The provision of housing accommodations for participants in close proximity to the training site.

(b) The residency program and the training component incorporated therein shall meet the requirements necessary to achieve and maintain accreditation with the accreditation committee for graduate medical education and the residency review committee for family practice. The program curriculum shall be developed to provide participants with the knowledge, training, and skills they require to be eligible to take the board certification examination offered by the American Board of Family Practice.”

SECTION 3. There is established a two-year demonstration project to be known as the “rural health care training project.” This project shall provide training for health care graduates and students, including medical and nursing graduates and students, at the family practice ambulatory health center developed under this Act. The school of medicine of the University of Hawaii, the school of nursing of the University of Hawaii Manoa, the school of nursing of the University of Hawaii Hilo, Hilo hospital, and the department of health shall work together in developing the rural health care training demonstration project.

SECTION 4. There is established a family practice ambulatory health center to be located at the “old” Hilo hospital site. This center shall:

- (1) Focus on the provision of primary care in a community-based setting;
- (2) Serve as one of the training sites for the family practice residency program of the school of medicine of the University of Hawaii; and
- (3) Serve as the training site for the rural health care training demonstration project.

The University of Hawaii (Manoa and Hilo campuses), Hilo hospital, and the department of health shall work cooperatively with the east Hawaii community in planning, developing, and establishing the family practice ambulatory health center at Hilo hospital.

SECTION 5. New statutory material is underscored.¹

SECTION 6. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

(Approved July 1, 1993.)

Note

1. Edited pursuant to HRS §23G-16.5.