
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO LOAN REPAYMENT FOR HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that many Hawaii
2 residents are unable to obtain timely and appropriate health
3 care due to shortages of primary health care providers in the
4 State. These shortages threaten individual health and
5 cumulatively affect the State's health care costs. The State's
6 rural areas, which have been designated by the federal
7 government as medically underserved areas, have been most
8 significantly affected by shortages of primary and behavioral
9 health care providers.

10 The increasingly high cost of education for health care
11 professionals binds graduates to a career path focused on
12 pursuing an income that makes it possible to repay often
13 exorbitant student loans. These career paths most often lead to
14 professional practice in highly specialized areas of care in
15 urban areas and not to general practice on neighbor islands or
16 in rural areas where the need is greatest. The legislature
17 finds that counties in the United States with robust primary



1 health care systems have lower costs and improved patient
2 outcomes. Recognizing this relationship, many states have made
3 the policy decision to dedicate public funds to the development
4 of a strong primary health care workforce.

5 The only loan repayment program currently available in this
6 State is administered by the John A. Burns School of Medicine at
7 the University of Hawaii at Manoa. This program leverages
8 private donations to access matching federal funds through the
9 State Loan Repayment Program of the National Health Service
10 Corps branch of the Department of Health and Human Services.
11 Since September 1, 2012, a total of twenty-five physicians,
12 nurse practitioners, and psychologists have received loan
13 repayment assistance through the program in exchange for work in
14 underserved geographic and practice areas in Hawaii. Currently,
15 health care professionals who have benefited from the loan
16 repayment program serve in the community in Waianae, Hilo, and
17 Wailuku; at health clinics in Kalihi-Palama Health Center, Queen
18 Emma Clinic, and Waikiki Health Center; and in public
19 institutional settings at the Federal Detention Center, Honolulu
20 and Halawa correctional facility.



1 The purpose of this Act is to appropriate funds to the
2 department of health to fund the loan repayment program
3 administered through the John A. Burns School of Medicine to
4 provide loan repayment for physicians, physician assistants,
5 nurse practitioners, psychologists, social workers, licensed
6 professional counselors, and marriage and family therapists who
7 agree to work in a federally-designated health professional
8 shortage area or an area of Hawaii found to be underserved.

9 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general
10 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$250,000 or so much
11 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2017-2018 for the
12 health care professionals loan repayment program; provided that
13 no funds shall be expended unless matched on a dollar-for-dollar
14 basis by funds from a private or other public source.

15 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of
16 health in coordination with the John A. Burns School of Medicine
17 of the University of Hawaii at Manoa for the purposes of this
18 Act.



H.B. NO. 916

1 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2017.

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H.B. NO. 916

Report Title:

Health Care Professionals; Loan Repayment; Appropriation

Description:

Makes an appropriation for the health care professionals loan repayment program administered through the John A. Burns School of Medicine.

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