A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO MEDICAL EDUCATION.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that according to a
2 November 2016 report by the University of Hawaii, Hawaii loses
3 on average fifty physicians per year due to retirement. It is
4 estimated that there will be a shortage of three to seven
5 hundred physicians by 2020. Within ten years, approximately
6 fifty-two per cent of physicians in the State will be sixty-five
7 years of age or older, which is a common age for retirement.
8
9 During the 2016-2017 academic year, the John A. Burns
10 school of medicine enrolled a total of two hundred eighty
11 students. Of the approximately two thousand three hundred
12 individuals who applied, only seventy - which is the largest
13 class the school can accommodate without adding faculty or
14 expanding facilities - were accepted into the first-year class.
15
16 It is imperative that the State attempt to reduce this
17 physician shortfall. Initiatives such as adding faculty or
18 expanding facilities at the John A. Burns school of medicine are
19 costly. However, a less expensive alternative exists:
financially assisting Hawaii residents to attend medical school in foreign nations in which the costs of education and living are lower than in Hawaii. Many physicians who currently practice in Hawaii have graduated from foreign medical schools, including those in the Philippines, and some of these physicians currently send their children to the Philippines to study medicine.

The colleges of medicine in the Philippines provide an attractive option for Hawaii students who wish to pursue a medical education, which would help to alleviate the growing shortage of practicing physicians in the State. Additionally, foreign students from many other Asian nations attend colleges of medicine in the Philippines. The legislature believes that more Hawaii residents intending to practice medicine would be encouraged to pursue their studies in the Philippines and return to address Hawaii's physician shortfall if their education is subsidized.

The purpose of this Act is to require the department of health to conduct a study regarding the establishment of a pilot program under which residents of Hawaii may pursue a doctor of medicine degree at colleges of medicine in the Philippines, with
state-provided financial support, in exchange for a commitment
to practice medicine in Hawaii after they graduate.

SECTION 2. (a) The department of health shall conduct a
study regarding the establishment of a pilot program under which
residents of Hawaii may pursue a doctor of medicine degree at a
college of medicine in the Philippines, with state-provided
financial support, in exchange for a commitment to practice
medicine in Hawaii after they graduate.

(b) The study shall consider the following:

(1) What qualifications, including those pertaining to
legal residence and academic achievement, individuals
shall meet to be eligible to participate in the pilot
program; provided that eligibility criteria shall be
structured to encourage individuals throughout Hawaii,
particularly rural and underserved areas, to apply to
and participate in the pilot program;

(2) The amount of financial support to be provided by the
State to individuals participating in the pilot
program and how such amounts shall be determined;

(3) The purposes for which the financial support provided
in paragraph (2) may be used; provided that tuition,
room and board, and transportation shall be allowable expenses;

(4) The required length and any other conditions of an individual's commitment to practice medicine in the State after graduation; provided that individuals shall be:

(A) Required to complete their medical internships in the United States; and

(B) Strongly encouraged to practice medicine in their home communities in Hawaii;

(5) The penalties to be imposed on or reimbursement of financial support to be required of, if any, an individual who fails to:

(A) Complete the doctor of medicine degree at a college of medicine in the Philippines; or

(B) Meet the required commitment to practice medicine in Hawaii after graduation;

(6) Any visa and other immigration requirements or restrictions imposed by the host nation on individuals participating in the pilot program;
(7) An analysis of the educational equivalency and accreditation standards of colleges of medicine in the Philippines as compared to medical schools in the United States; and

(8) Any professional licensing or other requirements applicable to graduates of foreign medical schools that need to be met by individuals participating in the pilot program before they are authorized to practice medicine in the State.

SECTION 3. The department of health shall submit a report of its findings and recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the regular session of 2020.

SECTION 4. 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 2019-2020 for the department of health to conduct the study required under section 2 of this Act.

The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of health for the purposes of this Act.
SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2019.
Report Title:
Department of Health; Philippine Medical Education; Pilot Program

Description:
Appropriates funds to the Department of Health to perform a study regarding a pilot program to pay for Hawaii residents to attend a college of medicine in the Philippines in exchange for a commitment to practice medicine in Hawaii after graduation.

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