
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 not only threaten individual health but
5 also cumulatively affect the State's health care costs. Rural
6 areas of Hawaii, 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. Social workers, marriage and family
10 therapists, and nurses are also urgently needed.

11 In many cases, the increasingly high cost of education for
12 health care professionals binds graduates to a career path that
13 provides sufficient income to repay often exorbitant student
14 loans. These career paths most frequently lead to professional
15 practice in highly specialized areas of care in urban areas
16 rather than in general practice on the neighbor islands or in
17 rural areas, where the need is greatest. The legislature
18 further finds that counties in the United States with robust



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

5 The only loan repayment program currently available in the
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 of the Department of Health and Human Services. Since
11 September 1, 2012, the loan repayment program has supported
12 forty-two recipients in exchange for work in underserved
13 geographic and practice areas in Hawaii. Currently, health care
14 professionals who have benefited from the loan repayment program
15 serve the communities of Waianae, Hilo, and Wailuku; at health
16 clinics in Kalihi-Palama Health Center, Queen Emma Clinic, and
17 Waikiki Health Center; and in public institutional settings at
18 the Federal Detention Center in Honolulu and the Halawa
19 correctional facility.

20 The legislature recognizes the considerable public outcomes
21 achieved from the general funds allocated in each year of the



1 2017-2019 biennium to educate, train, and facilitate health care
2 professionals to work in underserved areas. At this time, the
3 loan repayment program supports twenty-four providers in Hawaii.

4 The purpose of this Act is to appropriate funds to the
5 department of health to fund the health care provider loan
6 repayment program administered through the John A. Burns school
7 of medicine to provide loan repayment for physicians, physician
8 assistants, psychologists, nurse practitioners, social workers,
9 marriage and family therapists, and nurses who agree to work in
10 a federally-designated health professional shortage area or in a
11 geographic area of Hawaii found to be underserved.

12 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general
13 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$150,000 or so much
14 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2019-2020 for the
15 health care provider loan repayment program; provided that no
16 funds shall be released unless matched on a dollar-for-dollar
17 basis by funds from a private or another public source.

18 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of
19 health in coordination with the John A. Burns school of medicine
20 at the University of Hawaii at Manoa for the purposes of this
21 Act.



1 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2019.

Report Title:

Loan Repayment; Health Care Professionals; Matching Funds;
Appropriation

Description:

Appropriates funds for the Health Care Provider Loan Repayment Program administered through the John A. Burns School of Medicine of the University of Hawaii at Manoa; provided that the funds are matched on a dollar-for-dollar basis by a private or another public source. (CD1)

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