

JAN 23 2020

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 and behavioral health care
4 providers in the State. These shortages not only threaten
5 individual health, but also cumulatively affect the State's
6 health care costs. Areas of Hawaii that have been designated by
7 the federal government as medically underserved areas have been
8 most significantly affected by shortages of primary and
9 behavioral health care providers, such as physicians, nurse
10 practitioners, physician assistants, and psychologists. Social
11 workers, marriage and family therapists, and nurses are also
12 urgently needed in these areas.

13 In many cases, the increasingly high cost of education for
14 health care professionals binds graduates to a career path that
15 provides sufficient income to repay often exorbitant student
16 loans. These career paths most frequently lead to professional
17 practice in highly specialized fields of care in urban areas



1 rather than in general practice on the neighbor islands or in
2 remote areas where the need is greatest. Furthermore, the
3 counties in the United States with robust primary health care
4 systems have lower costs and improved patient outcomes.
5 Recognizing this correlation, many states have made the policy
6 decision to dedicate public funds to the development of a strong
7 primary health care workforce.

8 The legislature further finds that the only loan repayment
9 program currently available in the State is administered by the
10 John A. Burns school of medicine at the University of Hawaii at
11 Manoa. This program leverages private donations to access
12 matching federal funds through the state loan repayment program
13 of the National Health Service Corps of the Department of Health
14 and Human Services. Since September 1, 2012, the loan repayment
15 program has supported forty-six recipients in exchange for work
16 in underserved geographic and practice areas in Hawaii.
17 Currently, health care professionals who have benefited from the
18 loan repayment program serve the communities of Waianae, Hilo,
19 and Wailuku; at health clinics in Kalihi-Palama; and in public
20 institutional settings at the federal detention center in
21 Honolulu and the Halawa correctional facility.



1 The legislature recognizes the considerable public outcomes
2 achieved from the general funds allocated in each year of the
3 2017-2018 biennium, as well as the fiscal year 2019-2020, to
4 educate, train, and facilitate health care professionals to work
5 in underserved areas. At this time, the loan repayment program
6 supports twenty-four providers in Hawaii.

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

15 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general
16 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$500,000 or so much
17 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2020-2021 for the
18 health care provider loan repayment program; provided that no
19 funds shall be released unless matched on a dollar-for-dollar
20 basis by funds from a private or another public source.



S.B. NO. 2983

1 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of
2 health, in coordination with the University of Hawaii John A.
3 Burns school of medicine, for the purposes of this Act.

4 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2020.

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INTRODUCED BY: Resalya H Baker
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S.B. NO. 2983

Report Title:

Loan Repayment; Health Care Professionals; Department of Health;
University of Hawaii John A. Burns School of Medicine;
Appropriation

Description:

Appropriates funds for the health care provider loan repayment program.

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