
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 professionals in the State. These shortages not only threaten
5 individual health, but the entire State's health care system.
6 Areas of Hawaii that have been designated by the federal
7 government as medically underserved have been most significantly
8 affected by shortages of primary and behavioral health care
9 professionals, including physicians, nurse practitioners,
10 physician assistants, and psychologists. Social workers,
11 marriage and family therapists, and registered 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 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 underserved areas in the State where the need is greatest. The
3 legislature further finds that states with robust primary health
4 care 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 for underserved areas.

8 The legislature also finds that the Hawaii state loan
9 repayment program administered by the John A. Burns school of
10 medicine of the University of Hawaii at Manoa has been
11 successful at providing loan repayment to sixty-four
12 individuals, with eighty-three per cent remaining in Hawaii and
13 seventy per cent remaining at the site where they performed
14 their service. This program leverages public funds and private
15 donations to access matching federal funds through the National
16 Health Service Corps State Loan Repayment Program of the United
17 States Department of Health and Human Services. Since
18 September 1, 2012, the loan repayment program has supported
19 sixty-two recipients in exchange for work commitments in
20 underserved geographic practice areas in Hawaii. Currently,
21 health care professionals who have benefited from the loan



1 repayment program serve on all islands and in the communities of
2 Hilo, Kihei, Waianae, Wailuku, and Waimea; at health clinics in
3 Kalihi-Palama and Kokua Kalihi Valley; and in public
4 institutional settings at the federal detention center in
5 Honolulu, Halawa correctional facility, and Maui County
6 correctional center.

7 The legislature recognizes the considerable positive public
8 outcomes achieved using general fund allocations during the
9 2017-2018 biennium and fiscal year 2019-2020 to educate, train,
10 and facilitate health care professionals to work in underserved
11 areas. Currently, the loan repayment program supports
12 twenty-eight health care professionals in Hawaii.

13 The purpose of this Act is to appropriate funds to the
14 department of health to fund the Hawaii state loan repayment
15 program administered through the John A. Burns school of
16 medicine of the University of Hawaii at Manoa to provide loan
17 repayment for physicians, nurse practitioners, physician
18 assistants, psychologists, licensed clinical social workers,
19 psychiatric nurse specialists, licensed professional counselors,
20 marriage and family therapists, registered nurses, and certified



1 alcohol and substance abuse counselors who agree to work in a
2 federally-designated health professional shortage area.

3 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general
4 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
5 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2022-2023 for
6 the Hawaii state loan repayment program administered through the
7 John A. Burns school of medicine of the University of Hawaii at
8 Manoa; provided that no funds shall be released unless matched
9 on a dollar-for-dollar basis by funds from a private or another
10 public source.

11 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of
12 health in coordination with the John A. Burns school of medicine
13 of the University of Hawaii at Manoa for the purposes of this
14 Act.

15 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2060.

16



H.B. NO. 1549 H.D. 1

Report Title:

Hawaii State Loan Repayment Program; Health Care Professionals;
John A. Burns School of Medicine; Appropriation

Description:

Appropriates funds for the Hawaii state loan repayment program administered through the John A. Burns school of medicine, subject to a matching funds requirement. Effective 7/1/2060.
(HD1)

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