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State of Minnesota

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NINETY-FIRST SESSION

H. F. No. 4145

03/04/2020 Authored by Schomacker, Kiel, Hamilton, Poppe, Franson and others
The bill was read for the first time and referred to the Committee on Health and Human Services Policy

1.1 A bill for an act
1.2 relating to health; modifying the dentist education loan forgiveness program to
1.3 require 50 percent of the funds go to rural dentists; amending Minnesota Statutes
1.4 2018, section 144.1501, subdivisions 2, 4.

1.5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

1.6 Section 1. Minnesota Statutes 2018, section 144.1501, subdivision 2, is amended to read:

1.7 Subd. 2. Creation of account. (a) A health professional education loan forgiveness
1.8 program account is established. The commissioner of health shall use money from the
1.9 account to establish a loan forgiveness program:

1.10 (1) for medical residents and mental health professionals agreeing to practice in designated
1.11 rural areas or underserved urban communities or specializing in the area of pediatric
1.12 psychiatry;

1.13 (2) for midlevel practitioners agreeing to practice in designated rural areas or to teach
1.14 at least 12 credit hours, or 720 hours per year in the nursing field in a postsecondary program
1.15 at the undergraduate level or the equivalent at the graduate level;

1.16 (3) for nurses who agree to practice in a Minnesota nursing home; an intermediate care
1.17 facility for persons with developmental disability; a hospital if the hospital owns and operates
1.18 a Minnesota nursing home and a minimum of 50 percent of the hours worked by the nurse
1.19 is in the nursing home; a housing with services establishment as defined in section 144D.01,
1.20 subdivision 4; or for a home care provider as defined in section 144A.43, subdivision 4; or
1.21 agree to teach at least 12 credit hours, or 720 hours per year in the nursing field in a
1.22 postsecondary program at the undergraduate level or the equivalent at the graduate level;

2.1 (4) for other health care technicians agreeing to teach at least 12 credit hours, or 720
2.2 hours per year in their designated field in a postsecondary program at the undergraduate
2.3 level or the equivalent at the graduate level. The commissioner, in consultation with the
2.4 Healthcare Education-Industry Partnership, shall determine the health care fields where the
2.5 need is the greatest, including, but not limited to, respiratory therapy, clinical laboratory
2.6 technology, radiologic technology, and surgical technology;

2.7 (5) for pharmacists, advanced dental therapists, dental therapists, and public health nurses
2.8 who agree to practice in designated rural areas; and

2.9 (6) for dentists agreeing to deliver at least 25 percent of the dentist's yearly patient
2.10 encounters to state public program enrollees or patients receiving sliding fee schedule
2.11 discounts through a formal sliding fee schedule meeting the standards established by the
2.12 United States Department of Health and Human Services under Code of Federal Regulations,
2.13 title 42, section 51, chapter 303, agreeing to practice in designated rural areas that are
2.14 currently unserved or underserved by similar providers.

2.15 (b) Appropriations made to the account do not cancel and are available until expended,
2.16 except that at the end of each biennium, any remaining balance in the account that is not
2.17 committed by contract and not needed to fulfill existing commitments shall cancel to the
2.18 fund.

2.19 Sec. 2. Minnesota Statutes 2018, section 144.1501, subdivision 4, is amended to read:

2.20 Subd. 4. **Loan forgiveness.** The commissioner of health may select applicants each year
2.21 for participation in the loan forgiveness program, within the limits of available funding. In
2.22 considering applications, the commissioner shall give preference to applicants who document
2.23 diverse cultural competencies. The commissioner shall distribute available funds for loan
2.24 forgiveness proportionally among the eligible professions according to the vacancy rate for
2.25 each profession in the required geographic area, facility type, teaching area, patient group,
2.26 or specialty type specified in subdivision 2. The commissioner shall allocate funds for
2.27 physician loan forgiveness so that 75 percent of the funds available are used for rural
2.28 physician loan forgiveness and 25 percent of the funds available are used for underserved
2.29 urban communities and pediatric psychiatry loan forgiveness. The commissioner shall
2.30 allocate funds for dentist loan forgiveness so that 50 percent of the funds available are used
2.31 for rural dentist loan forgiveness. If the commissioner does not receive enough qualified
2.32 applicants each year to use the entire allocation of funds for any eligible profession, the
2.33 remaining funds may be allocated proportionally among the other eligible professions
2.34 according to the vacancy rate for each profession in the required geographic area, patient

3.1 group, or facility type specified in subdivision 2. Applicants are responsible for securing
3.2 their own qualified educational loans. The commissioner shall select participants based on
3.3 their suitability for practice serving the required geographic area or facility type specified
3.4 in subdivision 2, as indicated by experience or training. The commissioner shall give
3.5 preference to applicants closest to completing their training. For each year that a participant
3.6 meets the service obligation required under subdivision 3, up to a maximum of four years,
3.7 the commissioner shall make annual disbursements directly to the participant equivalent to
3.8 15 percent of the average educational debt for indebted graduates in their profession in the
3.9 year closest to the applicant's selection for which information is available, not to exceed the
3.10 balance of the participant's qualifying educational loans. Before receiving loan repayment
3.11 disbursements and as requested, the participant must complete and return to the commissioner
3.12 a confirmation of practice form provided by the commissioner verifying that the participant
3.13 is practicing as required under subdivisions 2 and 3. The participant must provide the
3.14 commissioner with verification that the full amount of loan repayment disbursement received
3.15 by the participant has been applied toward the designated loans. After each disbursement,
3.16 verification must be received by the commissioner and approved before the next loan
3.17 repayment disbursement is made. Participants who move their practice remain eligible for
3.18 loan repayment as long as they practice as required under subdivision 2.