

ASSEMBLY HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 2801

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: FEBRUARY 22, 2024

The Assembly Higher Education Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 2801.

This bill renames and broadens eligibility for the Primary Care Practitioner Loan Redemption Program established within the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority (HESAA).

The bill specifically:

- renames the program as the Health Care Professional Loan Redemption Program;
- provides for the participation in the program of psychiatrists and other health professionals working in fields designated by the Commissioner of Health for inclusion in the program;
- permits the Commissioner of Health, after consultation with the Commissioner of Labor and Workforce Development and the Director of Consumer Affairs, to designate additional health care fields experiencing critical Statewide labor shortages for inclusion in the program;
- requires the HESSA to annually submit a report on the Health Care Professional Loan Redemption Program to the Governor and the Legislature no later than August 1 of each year;
- increases the maximum loan redemption amount under the program from \$120,000 to \$200,000;
- expands the definition of “State designated underserved area” to include municipalities where more than 50 percent of households are at or below 185 percent of the federal poverty line and municipalities with a medically underserved area or population designation reflecting health status and economic indicators as determined by the United States Health Resources and Services Administration;
- requires certain data and data sources to be transmitted and posted, as applicable, by the Commissioner of Health and the HESAA;
- permits a program participant to identify an approved site for designation and approval under the program;
- establishes criteria for a site to be automatically designated as an approved site under the program; and

- establishes eligibility requirements for approved sites and prohibits the HESAA from requiring any additional eligibility requirements for approved sites.

The current law that dedicates 25 percent of the funds annually appropriated for the Health Care Professional Loan Redemption Program to the Nursing Faculty Loan Redemption Program is maintained under this bill. However, the bill specifies that any funds dedicated to the Nursing Faculty Loan Redemption Program that are in excess of the amount necessary to satisfy qualifying applications for the program are to be reallocated to the Health Care Professional Loan Redemption Program.

This bill was pre-filed for introduction in the 2024-2025 session pending technical review. As reported, the bill includes the changes required by technical review, which has been performed.