

115TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2042

To amend the Public Health Service Act to direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to establish a Frontline Providers Loan Repayment Program.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 6, 2017

Mr. LOEBSACK introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce

A BILL

To amend the Public Health Service Act to direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to establish a Frontline Providers Loan Repayment Program.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Access to Frontline
5 Health Care Act of 2017”.

6 **SEC. 2. FRONTLINE PROVIDERS LOAN REPAYMENT PRO-**
7 **GRAM.**

8 Part D of title III of the Public Health Service Act
9 (42 U.S.C. 254b et seq.) is amended—

1 (1) by redesignating the second subpart XI (as
2 added by section 10333 of Public Law 111–148) as
3 subpart XII;

4 (2) by redesignating the second section 340H
5 (as added by such section 10333) as section 340I;
6 and

7 (3) by adding at the end the following:

8 **“Subpart XIII—Frontline Health Care Services**

9 **“SEC. 340J. FRONTLINE PROVIDERS LOAN REPAYMENT**
10 **PROGRAM.**

11 “(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall establish
12 and carry out a Frontline Providers Loan Repayment Pro-
13 gram (in this section referred to as the ‘Loan Repayment
14 Program’) under which, pursuant to contracts in accord-
15 ance with this section—

16 “(1) the Secretary agrees to make student loan
17 repayments; and

18 “(2) the individual agrees to serve as a health
19 professional for a period of full-time service of not
20 less than 2 years at a health care facility serving a
21 frontline care scarcity area.

22 “(b) ELIGIBILITY.—To be eligible to participate in
23 the Loan Repayment Program, an individual must—

1 “(1) submit an application to participate in the
2 Loan Repayment Program in such form and manner
3 and at such time as specified by the Secretary; and

4 “(2) sign and submit to the Secretary, at the
5 time of submittal of such application, a written con-
6 tract (described in subsection (d)).

7 “(c) PARTICIPATION IN PROGRAM.—

8 “(1) IN GENERAL.—An individual becomes a
9 participant in the Loan Repayment Program only
10 upon the approval of the Secretary of the individ-
11 ual’s application submitted under subsection (b)(1)
12 and the Secretary’s acceptance of the contract sub-
13 mitted by the individual under subsection (b)(2).

14 “(2) PREFERENCE.—In awarding contracts
15 under this section, the Secretary shall give pref-
16 erence to applicants who have undertaken training
17 or coursework in interdisciplinary studies.

18 “(3) RECRUITMENT FOR INTERDISCIPLINARY
19 PROGRAMS.—The Secretary shall—

20 “(A) determine the frontline care scarcity
21 areas in which to place contract recipients
22 under this section; and

23 “(B) in making such determination, give
24 preference to areas with a demonstrated pro-
25 gram of interdisciplinary health care, or with

1 demonstrated plans to initiate interdisciplinary
2 approaches to community health care.

3 “(4) NOTICE.—The Secretary shall provide
4 written notice to an individual promptly upon the
5 Secretary’s approving, under paragraph (1), of the
6 individual’s participation in the Loan Repayment
7 Program.

8 “(d) CONTRACT.—The contract described in this sub-
9 section is a written contract between the Secretary and
10 an individual that contains—

11 “(1) an agreement that—

12 “(A) the Secretary agrees to provide the
13 individual with student loan repayment (de-
14 scribed in subsection (e)) for a period of time
15 as determined by the Secretary, to pay off debts
16 incurred during the course of the study or pro-
17 gram described in subsection (g)(2)(B); and

18 “(B) the individual agrees—

19 “(i) to accept provision of such a stu-
20 dent loan repayment to the individual; and

21 “(ii) to provide frontline care services
22 for a period of full-time service of not less
23 than 2 years at a health care facility serv-
24 ing a frontline care scarcity area;

1 “(2) a provision that any financial obligation of
2 the United States arising out of a contract entered
3 into under this section and any obligation of the in-
4 dividual which is conditioned thereon, is contingent
5 upon funds being appropriated for student loan re-
6 payment under this section;

7 “(3) a statement of the damages to which the
8 United States is entitled, under subsection (f), for
9 the individual’s breach of the contract; and

10 “(4) such other statements as the Secretary
11 deems appropriate of the rights and liabilities of the
12 Secretary and of the individual, not inconsistent
13 with the provisions of this section.

14 “(e) STUDENT LOAN REPAYMENT.—

15 “(1) AMOUNT.—The amount of an annual stu-
16 dent loan repayment under this section on behalf of
17 an individual shall be determined by the Secretary,
18 and shall take into consideration the need to pay a
19 sufficient amount to enable recruiting of health care
20 providers into the loan repayment program under
21 this section.

22 “(2) PAYMENTS DIRECTLY TO LOAN PRO-
23 VIDER.—The Secretary may contract with an indi-
24 vidual’s loan provider, for the payment to the loan
25 provider, on behalf of the individual, of the amounts

1 of a student loan repayment described in paragraph
2 (1).

3 “(f) BREACH OF CONTRACT.—If an individual
4 breaches a written contract under this section by failing
5 to begin such individual’s service obligation, or to complete
6 such service obligation, the United States shall be entitled
7 to recover from the individual an amount that is equal
8 to the sum of—

9 “(1) the total amount which has been paid to
10 the individual, or on behalf of the individual, under
11 the contract; and

12 “(2) any amount of interest, as determined by
13 the Secretary.

14 “(g) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

15 “(1) The term ‘frontline care scarcity area’
16 means an area, population group, or facility that—

17 “(A) is designated as a health professional
18 shortage area under section 332; or

19 “(B) is designated by the State in which
20 the area is located as having a shortage of
21 frontline care services.

22 “(2) The term ‘frontline care services’ means
23 health care services—

24 “(A) in the field of general surgery, optom-
25 etry, ophthalmology, chiropractic, physical ther-

1 apy, audiology, speech language pathology,
2 pharmacies, public health, podiatric medicine,
3 dietetics, occupational therapy, general pedi-
4 atrics, respiratory therapy, medical technology,
5 otolaryngology, or radiologic technology; and

6 “(B) provided by a general surgeon, op-
7 tometrist, ophthalmologist, chiropractor, phys-
8 ical therapist, audiologist, speech language pa-
9 thologist, pharmacist, public health profes-
10 sional, podiatric physician, registered dietician,
11 occupational therapist, pediatrician, respiratory
12 therapist, medical technologist, otolaryngologist,
13 or radiologic technologist who has completed an
14 appropriate course of study or program, offered
15 by an accredited institution of higher education
16 in the United States.

17 “(h) IMPLEMENTATION.—The Secretary shall begin
18 implementation of the loan repayment program under this
19 section within 180 days of the date of the enactment of
20 this section.”.

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