

111TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2810

To amend the Public Health Service Act to establish various programs for the recruitment and retention of public health workers and to eliminate critical public health workforce shortages in Federal, State, local, and tribal public health agencies and health centers.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 10, 2009

Ms. MATSUI introduced the following bill; which was referred to the
Committee on Energy and Commerce

A BILL

To amend the Public Health Service Act to establish various programs for the recruitment and retention of public health workers and to eliminate critical public health workforce shortages in Federal, State, local, and tribal public health agencies and health centers.

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 “Public Health Work-
5 force Investment Act of 2009”.

1 **SEC. 2. PURPOSES.**

2 The purpose of this Act is to address the impending
3 shortage of public health workers across the United States
4 by providing financial incentives for public health grad-
5 uates to work in public health departments and commu-
6 nity health centers.

7 **SEC. 3. PUBLIC HEALTH WORKFORCE RECRUITMENT AND**
8 **RETENTION PROGRAMS.**

9 Part E of title VII of the Public Health Service Act
10 (42 U.S.C. 294n et seq.) is amended by adding at the end
11 the following:

12 **“Subpart 3—Public Health Workforce Recruitment**
13 **and Retention Programs**

14 **“SEC. 780. PUBLIC HEALTH WORKFORCE SCHOLARSHIP**
15 **PROGRAM.**

16 “(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary shall estab-
17 lish the Public Health Workforce Scholarship Program
18 (referred to in this section as the ‘Program’) to assure
19 an adequate supply of public health professionals to elimi-
20 nate critical public health workforce shortages in Federal,
21 State, local, and tribal public health agencies and health
22 centers.

23 “(b) ELIGIBILITY.—To be eligible to participate in
24 the Program, an individual shall—

25 “(1) be accepted for enrollment, or be enrolled,
26 as a full-time or part-time student—

1 “(A) in an educational institution in a
2 State or territory that is accredited by the
3 Council on Education for Public Health; and

4 “(B) in a course of study or program that
5 is accredited by the Council on Education for
6 Public Health, offered by such institution and
7 approved by the Secretary, leading to a health
8 professions degree (graduate, undergraduate, or
9 associate) or certificate, which may include pub-
10 lic health, laboratory sciences, epidemiology, en-
11 vironmental health, health communications,
12 health education and behavioral sciences, health
13 policy and management, information sciences,
14 or public administration;

15 “(2) be a United States citizen;

16 “(3) submit an application to the Secretary to
17 participate in the Program; and

18 “(4) sign and submit to the Secretary, at the
19 time of the submission of such application, a written
20 contract (described in subsection (d)) to serve, upon
21 the completion of the course of study or program in-
22 volved, for the applicable period of obligated service
23 in the full-time employment of a Federal, State,
24 local, or tribal public health agency or a health cen-
25 ter.

1 “(c) DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION.—

2 “(1) APPLICATION AND CONTRACT FORMS.—

3 The Secretary shall disseminate application forms
4 and contract forms to individuals desiring to partici-
5 pate in the Program. The Secretary shall include
6 with such forms—

7 “(A) a fair summary of the rights and li-
8 abilities of an individual whose application is
9 approved (and whose contract is accepted) by
10 the Secretary, including in the summary a clear
11 explanation of the damages to which the United
12 States is entitled in the case of the individual’s
13 breach of the contract; and

14 “(B) information relating to the service ob-
15 ligation and such other information as may be
16 necessary for the individual to understand the
17 individual’s prospective participation in the Pro-
18 gram.

19 “(2) INFORMATION FOR SCHOOLS.—The Sec-
20 retary shall distribute to health professions schools
21 and other appropriate accredited academic institu-
22 tions and relevant Federal, State, local, and tribal
23 public health agencies and health centers, materials
24 providing information on the Program and shall en-
25 courage such schools, institutions, and agencies to

1 disseminate such materials to potentially eligible stu-
2 dents.

3 “(3) UNDERSTANDABILITY AND TIMING.—The
4 application form, contract form, and all other infor-
5 mation furnished by the Secretary under this section
6 shall—

7 “(A) be written in a manner calculated to
8 be understood by the average individual apply-
9 ing to participate in the Program; and

10 “(B) be made available by the Secretary on
11 a date sufficiently early to ensure that such in-
12 dividuals have adequate time to carefully review
13 and evaluate such forms and information.

14 “(d) CONTRACT.—The written contract between the
15 Secretary and an individual shall contain—

16 “(1) an agreement on the part of the Secretary
17 that the Secretary will provide the individual with a
18 scholarship for a period of years (not to exceed 4
19 academic years) during which the individual shall
20 pursue an approved course of study or program to
21 prepare the individual to serve in the public health
22 workforce;

23 “(2) an agreement on the part of the individual
24 that the individual will—

1 “(A) maintain full-time or part-time enroll-
2 ment in the approved course of study or pro-
3 gram described in subsection (b)(1) until the in-
4 dividual completes that course of study or pro-
5 gram;

6 “(B) while enrolled in the course of study
7 or program, maintain an acceptable level of aca-
8 demic standing (as determined under regula-
9 tions of the Secretary by the educational insti-
10 tution offering such course of study or pro-
11 gram); and

12 “(C) immediately upon graduation, serve
13 in the full-time employment of a Federal, State,
14 local, or tribal public health agency or a health
15 center in a position related to the course of
16 study or program for which the contract was
17 awarded for a period of time (referred to in this
18 section as the ‘period of obligated service’)
19 equal to the greater of—

20 “(i) 1 year for each academic year for
21 which the individual was provided a schol-
22 arship under the Program; or

23 “(ii) 2 years;

1 “(3) an agreement by both parties as to the na-
2 ture and extent of the scholarship assistance, which
3 may include—

4 “(A) payment of the tuition or fee ex-
5 penses of the individual;

6 “(B) payment of all other reasonable edu-
7 cational expenses of the individual including
8 fees, books, equipment, and laboratory ex-
9 penses; and

10 “(C) payment of a stipend of not more
11 than \$1,200 per month for each month of the
12 academic year involved (indexed to account for
13 increases in the Consumer Price Index);

14 “(4) a provision that any financial obligation of
15 the United States arising out of a contract entered
16 into under this subsection and any obligation of the
17 individual which is conditioned thereon, is contingent
18 upon funds being appropriated for scholarships
19 under this section;

20 “(5) a statement of the damages to which the
21 United States is entitled for the individual’s breach
22 of the contract; and

23 “(6) such other statements of the rights and li-
24 abilities of the Secretary and of the individual, not
25 inconsistent with the provisions of this section.

1 “(e) POSTPONING OBLIGATED SERVICE.—With re-
2 spect to an individual receiving a degree or certificate from
3 a school of medicine, public health, nursing, osteopathic
4 medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine, optometry, po-
5 diatry, pharmacy, psychology, or social work under a
6 scholarship under the Program, the date of the initiation
7 of the period of obligated service may be postponed, upon
8 the submission by the individual of a petition for such
9 postponement and approval by the Secretary, to the date
10 on which the individual completes an approved internship,
11 residency, or other relevant public health advanced train-
12 ing program.

13 “(f) ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS.—

14 “(1) CONTRACTS WITH INSTITUTIONS.—The
15 Secretary may contract with an educational institu-
16 tion in which a participant in the Program is en-
17 rolled, for the payment to the educational institution
18 of the amounts of tuition or fees and other reason-
19 able educational expenses described in subsection
20 (d)(3).

21 “(2) EMPLOYMENT CEILINGS.—Notwith-
22 standing any other provision of law, individuals who
23 have entered into written contracts with the Sec-
24 retary under this section, while undergoing academic
25 training, shall not be counted against any employ-

1 “(b) ELIGIBILITY.—To be eligible to participate in
2 the Program, an individual shall—

3 “(1)(A) be accepted for enrollment, or be en-
4 rolled, as a full-time or part-time student in an aca-
5 demic educational institution accredited by the
6 Council on Education for Public Health in a State
7 or territory in the final year of a course of study or
8 program offered by that institution leading to a
9 health professions degree or certificate, which may
10 include a degree (graduate, undergraduate, or asso-
11 ciate) or certificate relating to public health, labora-
12 tory sciences, epidemiology, environmental health,
13 health communications, health policy and manage-
14 ment, health education and behavioral sciences, in-
15 formation sciences, or public administration; or

16 “(B) have graduated, within 10 years, from an
17 educational institution accredited by the Council on
18 Education for Public Health in a State or territory
19 and received a health professions degree (graduate,
20 undergraduate, or associate) or certificate, which
21 may include a degree (graduate, undergraduate, or
22 associate) or certificate relating to public health, lab-
23 oratory sciences, epidemiology, environmental health,
24 health communications, health education and behav-

1 ioral sciences, health policy and management, infor-
2 mation sciences, or public administration;

3 “(2)(A) in the case of an individual described in
4 paragraph (1)(A), have accepted employment with a
5 Federal, State, local, or tribal public health agency
6 or a health center, as recognized by the Secretary,
7 to commence upon graduation; or

8 “(B) in the case of an individual described in
9 paragraph (1)(B), be employed by, or have accepted
10 employment with, a Federal, State, local, or tribal
11 public health agency or a health center, as recog-
12 nized by the Secretary;

13 “(3) be a United States citizen;

14 “(4) submit an application to the Secretary to
15 participate in the Program; and

16 “(5) sign and submit to the Secretary, at the
17 time of the submission of such application, a written
18 contract (described in subsection (d)) to serve for
19 the applicable period of obligated service in the full-
20 time employment of a Federal, State, local, or tribal
21 public health agency or a health center.

22 “(c) DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION.—

23 “(1) APPLICATION AND CONTRACT FORMS.—

24 The Secretary shall disseminate application forms
25 and contract forms to individuals desiring to partici-

1 pate in the Program. The Secretary shall include
2 with such forms—

3 “(A) a fair summary of the rights and li-
4 abilities of an individual whose application is
5 approved (and whose contract is accepted) by
6 the Secretary, including in the summary a clear
7 explanation of the damages to which the United
8 States is entitled to recover in the case of the
9 individual’s breach of the contract; and

10 “(B) information relating to the service ob-
11 ligation and such other information as may be
12 necessary for the individual to understand the
13 individual’s prospective participation in the Pro-
14 gram.

15 “(2) INFORMATION FOR SCHOOLS.—The Sec-
16 retary shall distribute to health professions schools
17 and programs and other appropriate accredited aca-
18 demic institutions and relevant Federal, State, local,
19 and tribal public health agencies and health centers,
20 materials providing information on the Program and
21 shall encourage such schools, institutions, programs,
22 and agencies to disseminate such materials to poten-
23 tially eligible students.

24 “(3) UNDERSTANDABILITY AND TIMING.—The
25 application form, contract form, and all other infor-

1 mation furnished by the Secretary under this section
2 shall—

3 “(A) be written in a manner calculated to
4 be understood by the average individual apply-
5 ing to participate in the Program; and

6 “(B) be made available by the Secretary on
7 a date sufficiently early to ensure that such in-
8 dividuals have adequate time to carefully review
9 and evaluate such forms and information.

10 “(d) CONTRACT.—The written contract (referred to
11 in this section) between the Secretary and an individual
12 shall contain—

13 “(1) an agreement on the part of the Secretary
14 that the Secretary will repay on behalf of the indi-
15 vidual loans incurred by the individual in the pursuit
16 of the relevant public health workforce educational
17 degree or certificate in accordance with the terms of
18 the contract;

19 “(2) an agreement on the part of the individual
20 that the individual will serve, immediately upon
21 graduation in the case of an individual described in
22 subsection (b)(1)(A) service, or in the case of an in-
23 dividual described in subsection (b)(1)(B) continue
24 to serve, in the full-time employment of a Federal,
25 State, local, or tribal public health agency or health

1 center in a position related to the course of study or
2 program for which the contract was awarded for a
3 period of time (referred to in this section as the ‘pe-
4 riod of obligated service’) equal to the greater of—

5 “(A) 3 years; or

6 “(B) such longer period of time as deter-
7 mined appropriate by the Secretary and the in-
8 dividual;

9 “(3) an agreement, as appropriate, on the part
10 of the individual to relocate for the entire period of
11 obligated service to a political jurisdiction designated
12 by the Secretary to be a priority service area in ex-
13 change for an additional loan repayment incentive
14 amount that does not exceed 20 percent of the indi-
15 vidual’s eligible loan repayment award per academic
16 year such that the total of the loan repayment and
17 the incentive amount shall not exceed $\frac{1}{3}$ of the eligi-
18 ble loan balance per year;

19 “(4) in the case of an individual described in
20 subsection (b)(1)(A) who is in the final year of study
21 and who has accepted employment with a Federal,
22 State, local, or tribal public health agency or a
23 health center upon graduation, an agreement on the
24 part of the individual to complete the education or
25 training, maintain an acceptable level of academic

1 standing (as determined by the education institution
2 offering the course of study or training), and agree
3 to the period of obligated service;

4 “(5) a provision that any financial obligation of
5 the United States arising out of a contract entered
6 into under this section and any obligation of the in-
7 dividual that is conditioned thereon, is contingent on
8 funds being appropriated for loan repayments under
9 this section;

10 “(6) a statement of the damages to which the
11 United States is entitled, under this section for the
12 individual’s breach of the contract; and

13 “(7) such other statements of the rights and li-
14 abilities of the Secretary and of the individual, not
15 inconsistent with this section.

16 “(e) PAYMENTS.—

17 “(1) IN GENERAL.—A loan repayment provided
18 for an individual under a written contract under the
19 Program shall consist of payment, in accordance
20 with paragraph (2), on behalf of the individual of
21 the principal, interest, and related expenses on gov-
22 ernment and commercial loans received by the indi-
23 vidual regarding the undergraduate or graduate edu-
24 cation of the individual (or both), which loans were
25 made for—

1 “(A) tuition or fee expenses; or

2 “(B) all other reasonable educational ex-
3 penses, including fees, books, and laboratory ex-
4 penses, incurred by the individual.

5 “(2) PAYMENTS FOR YEARS SERVED.—

6 “(A) IN GENERAL.—For each year of obli-
7 gated service that an individual contracts to
8 serve under subsection (d) the Secretary may
9 pay up to \$35,000 on behalf of the individual
10 for loans described in paragraph (1). With re-
11 spect to participants under the Program whose
12 total eligible loans are less than \$105,000, the
13 Secretary shall pay an amount that does not ex-
14 ceed $\frac{1}{3}$ of the eligible loan balance for each
15 year of obligated service of the individual.

16 “(B) REPAYMENT SCHEDULE.—Any ar-
17 rangement made by the Secretary for the mak-
18 ing of loan repayments in accordance with this
19 subsection shall provide that any repayments
20 for a year of obligated service shall be made no
21 later than the end of the fiscal year in which
22 the individual completes such year of service.

23 “(3) TAX LIABILITY.—For the purpose of pro-
24 viding reimbursements for tax liability resulting

1 from payments under paragraph (2) on behalf of an
2 individual—

3 “(A) the Secretary shall, in addition to
4 such payments, make payments to the indi-
5 vidual in an amount not to exceed 39 percent
6 of the total amount of loan repayments made
7 for the taxable year involved; and

8 “(B) may make such additional payments
9 as the Secretary determines to be appropriate
10 with respect to such purpose.

11 “(4) PAYMENT SCHEDULE.—The Secretary
12 may enter into an agreement with the holder of any
13 loan for which payments are made under the Pro-
14 gram to establish a schedule for the making of such
15 payments.

16 “(f) POSTPONING OBLIGATED SERVICE.—With re-
17 spect to an individual receiving a degree or certificate from
18 a school of medicine, public health, nursing, osteopathic
19 medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine, optometry, po-
20 diatry, pharmacy, psychology, or social work, the date of
21 the initiation of the period of obligated service may be
22 postponed, upon the submission by the individual of a peti-
23 tion for such postponement and approval by the Secretary,
24 to the date on which the individual completes an approved

1 internship, residency, or other relevant public health ad-
2 vanced training program.

3 “(g) ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS.—

4 “(1) HIRING PRIORITY.—Notwithstanding any
5 other provision of law, Federal, State, local, and
6 tribal public health agencies and health centers may
7 give hiring priority to any individual who has quali-
8 fied for and is willing to execute a contract to par-
9 ticipate in the Program.

10 “(2) EMPLOYMENT CEILINGS.—Notwith-
11 standing any other provision of law, individuals who
12 have entered into written contracts with the Sec-
13 retary under this section, who are serving as full-
14 time employees of a State, local, or tribal public
15 health agency or a health center, or who are in the
16 last year of public health workforce academic prepa-
17 ration, shall not be counted against any employment
18 ceiling affecting the Department or any other Fed-
19 eral agency.

20 “(h) BREACH OF CONTRACT.—An individual who
21 fails to comply with the contract entered into under sub-
22 section (d) shall be subject to the same financial penalties
23 as provided for under section 338E for breaches of loan
24 repayment contracts under section 338B.

1 “(i) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
2 are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section
3 \$195,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2010 through
4 2015.

5 **“SEC. 782. GRANTS FOR STATE AND LOCAL PROGRAMS.**

6 “(a) IN GENERAL.—For the purpose of operating
7 State, local, tribal, and health center public health work-
8 force loan repayment programs under this subpart, the
9 Secretary shall award a grant to any public health agency
10 that receives public health cooperative agreements, or
11 other successor cooperative agreements, from the Depart-
12 ment of Health and Human Services.

13 “(b) REQUIREMENTS.—A State or local loan repay-
14 ment program operated with a grant under subsection (a)
15 shall incorporate all provisions of the Public Health Work-
16 force Loan Repayment Program under section 781, in-
17 cluding the ability to designate priority service areas with-
18 in the relevant political jurisdiction.

19 “(c) ADMINISTRATION.—The head of the State or
20 local office that receives a grant under subsection (a) shall
21 be responsible for contracting and operating the loan re-
22 payment program under the grant.

23 “(d) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this sec-
24 tion shall be construed to obligate or limit any State, local,
25 or tribal government entity from implementing inde-

1 pendent or supplemental public health workforce develop-
2 ment programs within their borders.

3 **“SEC. 783. TRAINING FOR MID-CAREER PUBLIC HEALTH**
4 **PROFESSIONALS.**

5 “(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may make grants
6 to, or enter into contracts with, any eligible entity to
7 award scholarships to eligible individuals to enroll in de-
8 gree or professional training programs for the purpose of
9 enabling mid-career professionals in the public health
10 workforce to receive additional training in the field of pub-
11 lic health.

12 “(b) ELIGIBILITY.—

13 “(1) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The term ‘eligible en-
14 tity’ indicates an educational institution accredited
15 by the Council on Education for Public Health that
16 offers a course of study, certificate program, or pro-
17 fessional training program in infectious disease
18 science, medicine, public health, veterinary medicine,
19 or other discipline impacting or influenced by bioter-
20 rorism or emerging infectious diseases.

21 “(2) ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS.—The term ‘eligi-
22 ble individuals’ includes those individuals employed
23 in public health positions at the Federal, State, trib-
24 al, or local level or a health center who are inter-
25 ested in retaining or upgrading their education.

1 “(c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
2 are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section,
3 \$30,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2010 through
4 2015.

5 **“SEC. 784. CATALOGUE OF FEDERAL PUBLIC HEALTH**
6 **WORKFORCE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES.**

7 “(a) IN GENERAL.—The Director of the Office of
8 Personnel Management, in cooperation with the Secretary,
9 shall ensure that, included in the Internet website of the
10 Office of Personnel Management, there is an online cata-
11 logue, or link to an online catalogue, of public health work-
12 force employment opportunities in the Federal Govern-
13 ment.

14 “(b) REQUIREMENTS.—To the extent practicable, the
15 catalogue described in subsection (a) shall include—

16 “(1) existing and projected job openings in the
17 Federal public health workforce; and

18 “(2) a general discussion of the occupations
19 that comprise the Federal public health workforce.

20 “(c) INFORMATION.—The Secretary shall include a
21 copy of the catalogue described in subsection (a), or a
22 prominent reference to the catalogue, in—

23 “(1) the application forms provided under sec-
24 tion 780(c)(1); and

1 “(2) the information for schools provided under
2 section 780(c)(2).

3 **“SEC. 785. ACADEMIC HEALTH DEPARTMENTS GRANT PRO-**
4 **GRAM.**

5 “(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—

6 “(1) IN GENERAL.—In order to improve the
7 training of public health students, the Secretary,
8 acting through the Director of the Centers for Dis-
9 ease Control and Prevention and in consultation
10 with the Association of Schools of Public Health,
11 shall carry out the Academic Health Departments
12 grant program (referred to in this section as the
13 ‘Program’) under which the Secretary shall award
14 competitive grants, of not more than \$250,000 each,
15 to eligible partnerships to establish or maintain Aca-
16 demic Health Departments.

17 “(2) ACADEMIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT DE-
18 FINED.—For purposes of this section, the term ‘Aca-
19 demic Health Department’ means a program admin-
20 istered by an eligible partnership that provides for
21 collaboration between the academic and practice as-
22 pects of public health. The purpose of such a depart-
23 ment is to increase the number of graduates in pub-
24 lic health who work in State and local health depart-
25 ments, increase the relevance of the curriculum in

1 schools and programs of public health to health de-
2 partment practice, and to increase the use of aca-
3 demic theories, knowledge, and methodologies in the
4 work of health departments.

5 “(b) ELIGIBILITY.—For purposes of this section, an
6 eligible partnership is a partnership, with respect to estab-
7 lishing an Academic Health Department, consisting of—

8 “(1) a State or local public health department;
9 and

10 “(2) a school of public health or a public health
11 degree program that is accredited by the Council on
12 Education for Public Health.

13 “(c) USE OF FUNDS.—An eligible partnership (as de-
14 scribed in subsection (b)) may use funds provided under
15 a grant made under subsection (a) for the following pur-
16 poses, with respect to an Academic Health Department:

17 “(1) To provide for curriculum development.

18 “(2) To provide for training and academic in-
19 struction.

20 “(3) To conduct leadership seminars.

21 “(4) To conduct training needs assessment sur-
22 veys.

23 “(5) To facilitate appropriate staff of the State
24 or local health department participating in the eligi-
25 ble partnership to teach with the school of public

1 health or public health degree program participating
2 in such partnership.

3 “(6) To facilitate faculty and students of the
4 school of public health or public health degree pro-
5 gram participating in the eligible partnership to
6 work in the health department participating in such
7 partnership.

8 “(7) To provide for a project coordinator.

9 “(8) To provide for subgrants to organizations
10 to conduct activities consistent with the goals of the
11 Program.

12 “(9) Other appropriate activities specified by
13 the Secretary to recruit public health students to
14 full-time employment in a health department after
15 graduation.

16 “(d) REPORTS.—

17 “(1) GRANT RECIPIENT REPORTS TO THE SEC-
18 RETARY.—Each recipient of a grant awarded under
19 subsection (a) shall submit to the Secretary a report
20 for each year for which the recipient received such
21 a grant on the results and outcomes of the activities
22 funded by such grant during such year.

23 “(2) REPORTS TO CONGRESS.—For the 3-year
24 period beginning on the date of the establishment of
25 the Program, and for each subsequent 3-year period

1 in which the Program is in existence, the Secretary
2 shall submit to Congress a report, on the results and
3 outcomes of the Program during such 3-year period,
4 including the number of Academic Health Depart-
5 ments funded by grants under the Program, the
6 number of students trained through grants under
7 the Program, and the number of trainees partici-
8 pating in such Academic Health Departments who
9 remain in public health professions.

10 “(e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
11 is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section,
12 \$4,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2010 through
13 2015.”.

14 **SEC. 4. LICENSURE OR CERTIFICATION EXAM FOR SOCIAL**
15 **WORKERS PARTICIPATING IN NATIONAL**
16 **HEALTH SERVICE CORPS LOAN REPAYMENT**
17 **PROGRAM.**

18 (a) AMENDMENT.—Section 338B of the Public
19 Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 254l–1) is amended by add-
20 ing at the end the following:

21 “(i) LICENSURE OR CERTIFICATION EXAM FOR SO-
22 CIAL WORKERS.—

23 “(1) IN GENERAL.—If the Secretary chooses to
24 require a social worker to pass a licensure or certifi-
25 cation exam to be eligible to participate in the Loan

1 Repayment Program, the Secretary shall treat pas-
2 sage of a State’s licensure or certification exam for
3 social workers as satisfying such requirement if—

4 “(A) the State submits a request to the
5 Secretary for such treatment; and

6 “(B) the Secretary approves the request.

7 “(2) REVIEW OF STATE REQUESTS.—

8 “(A) STANDARD.—The Secretary shall ap-
9 prove a request submitted by a State under
10 paragraph (1)(A) if the State demonstrates
11 that its licensure or certification exam for social
12 workers is sufficiently stringent to assure that
13 any deviation from the exam otherwise required
14 under this section poses no threat to patient
15 safety or public health.

16 “(B) TIMING.—The Secretary shall ap-
17 prove or disapprove each request submitted by
18 a State under paragraph (1)(A) not later than
19 180 days after the Secretary’s receipt of such
20 request.”.

21 (b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Section 338B(i) of the Pub-
22 lic Health Service Act, as added by subsection (a), takes
23 effect on the date that is 3 months after the date of enact-
24 ment of this Act.

○