
OLR Bill Analysis

sSB 449

AN ACT CONCERNING THE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF PHYSICIANS IN THE STATE.

SUMMARY

This bill requires the Office of Higher Education (OHE) to administer a physician student loan reimbursement grant program starting in FY 23. OHE must do so in collaboration with the Department of Public Health (DPH) and within available appropriations.

The program must be open to state-licensed physicians employed here who (1) graduated from an in-state medical school or (2) completed their residency at a DPH-licensed hospital. It must provide reimbursement grants of 20% of the physician's federal and state student loan balance per year.

Under the bill, physicians may apply to OHE for grants in the time and manner the executive director prescribes and must only be reimbursed for loan payments made while they are employed as a physician in the state. Any unspent funds appropriated for the program carry forward, rather than lapse, to the next fiscal year.

The bill also requires the DPH commissioner, by January 1, 2023, to convene a working group to advise her on ways to enhance physician recruitment in the state. The group must report its findings to the commissioner and the Public Health Committee by January 1, 2024.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2022

PHYSICIAN RECRUITMENT WORKING GROUP

Under the bill, the physician recruitment working group must examine at least the following issues:

1. recruiting, retaining, and compensating primary care,

- psychiatric, and behavioral health care providers;
- 2. the potential effectiveness of student loan forgiveness;
- 3. barriers to recruiting and retaining physicians due to non-compete clauses;
- 4. access to health care providers and any effect of the health insurance landscape on limiting health care access;
- 5. barriers to physicians participating in health care networks; and
- 6. assistance for graduate medical education training.

The group must include at least the following 14 members, as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Physician Recruitment Working Group Required Membership

One representative each from an-state hospital association, in-state medical society, and a regional physician recruiter association
Two state-licensed physicians: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one from a small group practice (i.e., less than eight full-time equivalent physicians) • one from a multisite group practice (i.e., a group with over 100 full-time equivalent physicians practicing across the state)
One representative each from at least three different medical schools
The human resources director of at least one in-state hospital
A member of a patient advocacy group
Four public members

The bill requires the group to elect chairpersons from among its members.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Public Health Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 29 Nay 0 (03/25/2022)