

111TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2891

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

JUNE 16, 2009

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa (for himself and Mr. SPACE) 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 2009”.

1 **SEC. 2. FRONTLINE PROVIDERS LOAN REPAYMENT PRO-**
2 **GRAM.**

3 Part D of title III of the Public Health Service Act
4 (42 U.S.C. 254b et seq.) is amended by adding at the end
5 the following:

6 **“Subpart XI—Frontline Health Care Services**

7 **“SEC. 340H. FRONTLINE PROVIDERS LOAN REPAYMENT**
8 **PROGRAM.**

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

14 “(1) the Secretary agrees to make student loan
15 repayments; and

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

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

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

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

4 “(c) PARTICIPATION IN PROGRAM.—

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

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

15 “(3) RECRUITMENT FOR INTERDISCIPLINARY
16 PROGRAMS.—The Secretary shall—

17 “(A) determine the frontline care scarcity
18 areas in which to place contract recipients
19 under this section; and

20 “(B) in making such determination, give
21 preference to areas with a demonstrated pro-
22 gram of interdisciplinary health care, or with
23 demonstrated plans to initiate interdisciplinary
24 approaches to community health care.

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

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

9 “(1) an agreement that—

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

16 “(B) the individual agrees—

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

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

23 “(2) a provision that any financial obligation of
24 the United States arising out of a contract entered
25 into under this section and any obligation of the in-

1 dividual which is conditioned thereon, is contingent
2 upon funds being appropriated for student loan re-
3 payment under this section;

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

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

11 “(e) STUDENT LOAN REPAYMENT.—

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

19 “(2) PAYMENTS DIRECTLY TO LOAN PRO-
20 VIDER.—The Secretary may contract with an indi-
21 vidual’s loan provider, for the payment to the loan
22 provider, on behalf of the individual, of the amounts
23 of a student loan repayment described in paragraph
24 (1).

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

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

10 “(2) any amount of interest, as determined by
11 the Secretary.

12 “(g) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

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

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

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

20 “(2) The term ‘frontline care services’ means
21 health care services—

22 “(A) in the field of general surgery, optom-
23 etry, ophthalmology, chiropractic, physical ther-
24 apy, audiology, speech language pathology,
25 pharmacies, public health, podiatric medicine,

1 dietetics, occupational therapy, general pediat-
2 rics, respiratory therapy, medical technology,
3 otolaryngology, or radiologic technology; and

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

15 “(h) AUTHORIZED OF APPROPRIATIONS.—For the
16 purpose of carrying out this section, there are authorized
17 to be appropriated the following:

18 “(1) For fiscal year 2010, \$78,000,000.

19 “(2) For fiscal year 2011, \$93,000,000.

20 “(3) For fiscal year 2012, \$108,000,000.

21 “(4) For fiscal year 2013, \$123,000,000.

22 “(5) For fiscal year 2014, \$138,000,000.

23 “(6) For fiscal year 2015, \$153,000,000.

24 “(7) For fiscal year 2016, and each subsequent
25 fiscal year, the amount appropriated for the pre-

1 ceding fiscal year adjusted by one plus the average
2 percentage increase in the costs of health professions
3 education during the prior fiscal year.

4 “(i) IMPLEMENTATION.—The Secretary shall begin
5 implementation of the loan repayment program under this
6 section within 180 days of the date of the enactment of
7 this section.”.

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