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Councilmember Vincent C. Gray

A BILL

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IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

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To establish a scholarship program for high-need health care careers to be administered by the Mayor; to establish eligibility requirements for applicants to the program; to require commitments for program participant; to establish eligibility and selection criteria for participating training programs and schools; to allow the Mayor rule making authority to implement this program; to expand the Health Recruitment Program to include loan repayments for medical specializes, sub-specialties and part-time hours in medically underserved areas; to allow the Mayor to issue schedules for the loan payment program and to allow the Mayor rule making authority to implement this program.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this act may be cited as the "High Need Healthcare Career Scholarship and Health Professional Loan Repayment Program Emergency Amendment Act of 2022".

TITLE I. HIGH-NEED HEALTHCARE CAREER SCHOLARSHIP AND SUPPORTS PROGRAM.

Sec. 101. Authorization to establish the High-Need Healthcare Careers Scholarships and Supports Program.

(a)(1) The Mayor shall establish the High-Need Healthcare Careers Scholarships and Supports Program ("Program") to increase the number of healthcare workers in high-need healthcare careers in the District by providing supports and services to individuals who agree to serve as such workers in the District.

(2) The Program may pay for expenses incurred by:

(A) Program participants to obtain credentials to serve as healthcare workers in high-need healthcare careers, including the costs of education, training, and examinations; and

(B) Approved schools and training programs for providing education and training to program participants.

(b) To participate in the Program, an applicant must:

(1) Be a citizen or permanent resident of the United States;

(2) Submit a completed application, in such form and with such information and documentation as may be required by the Mayor; and

(3) Be selected for participation by the Mayor based upon:

(A) Relevant experience of the individual;

(B) The individual's ability to successfully complete the necessary education, training, examination, and licensing, certification, or registration requirements to serve as a healthcare worker in a high-need healthcare career in the District;

(C) The individual's ability to serve successfully as a healthcare worker in a high-need healthcare career;

(D) The individual's commitment to serve as a healthcare worker in a high-need healthcare career in the District for at least 2 years following their licensure, certification, or registration as a healthcare worker; and

(E) Such other factors as the Mayor may establish, which may include preferential consideration for:

(i) Residents of the District;

(ii) Applicants committed to enrolling in a school or training program located in the District;

(iii) Residents of a health professional shortage area or medically underserved area, as those terms are defined in section 2(4) and 2(5) of the District of Columbia Health Professional Recruitment Program Act of 2005, effective March 8, 2006 (D.C. Law 16-71; D.C. Official Code § 7-751.01(4) and (5));

(iv) Applicants who are immediately eligible and available for education or training;

(v) Applicants who agree to commit to longer periods of service as a healthcare worker in a high-need healthcare career in the District;

(vi) Applicants who are fluent in Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, or Amharic; and

(vii) Applicants demonstrating a desire to reside within the District.

(c) Each applicant selected for participation in the Program shall enter into a contract with the District agreeing to complete the necessary education, training, and examinations, serve a minimum of 2 years as a healthcare worker in a high-need healthcare career in the District, and provide such information and reports on the individual's participation in the program as may be required by the District. The contract may provide the District with specific remedies for a program participant's breach of the contract, and the District shall have the general right to enforce the contract in law or equity.

Sec. 102. Eligibility requirements for participating schools and training programs.

(a) A school or training program applying to participate in the Program shall be licensed to operate and in good standing in the District or another state.

(b) Eligible schools and training programs shall be competitively reviewed and selected by the Mayor for participation in the program based upon:

(1) The number of years during which the school or training program has successfully provided education or training in the healthcare sector and in high-need healthcare careers;

(2) The quality of the education or training provided by the school or training program;

(3) The school or training program's commitment to train individuals for high-need healthcare careers; and

(4) Such other relevant factors as the Mayor may establish by rule.

(c) Preferential consideration for participation in the program shall be given to eligible schools and training programs located in the District.

(d) Each school or training program selected to participate in the program shall enter into a contract with the District agreeing to:

(1) Educate or train program participants;

(2) Assist program participants in the required examinations;

(3) Pay the examination fees necessary for the program participant's licensure, registration, or certification in a high-need health care career;

(4) Assist program participants in submitting applications for their licensure, registration, or certification in a high-need health care career; and

(5) Submit such reports and information regarding the school or training program's Program participation as the Mayor may require.

(e) The contract may provide the District with specific remedies for a school or training program's breach of the contract, and the District shall have the general right to enforce the contract in law or equity.

Sec. 103. Rulemaking authority.

The Mayor, pursuant to Title I of the District of Columbia Administrative Procedure Act, approved October 21, 1968 (82 Stat. 1024; D.C. Official Code § 2-501 *et seq.*), may issue rules to implement the provisions of this title.

TITLE II. CONFORMING AMENDMENT; FISCAL IMPACT; EFFECTIVE DATE.

Sec. 201. Section 47-1803.02(a)(2) is amended by adding a new sub-paragraph (RR) to read as follows:

"(XX) The amount received by an individual or a school or program on behalf of an individual to cover tuition, fees, or other expenses pursuant to Title I of the High-Need Healthcare Career Scholarship and Supports Program Emergency Amendment Act of 2022, passed on emergency basis on June 7, 2022 (Enrolled version of Bill 24-XXX).".

TITLE III. MEDICAL LOAN REPAYMENT RECRUITMENT PROGRAM.

(a) Section 2 (D.C. Official Code § 7-751.01) is amended as follows:

(1) Paragraph (4) is amended by striking the phrase "dental, or mental health professionals" and inserting the phrase "dental, mental health, specialty or sub-specialty professionals" in its place.

(2) Paragraph (7) is amended to read as follows:

"(7) "Physician" means a person who is licensed by the Board of Medicine to engage in the practice of medicine in the District and who is in good standing under such license."

(3) Paragraph (9) is amended to read as follows:

"(9) "Service obligation site" means:

"(A) A nonprofit entity located in a Health Professional Shortage Area or a Medically Underserved Area within the District that provides primary care, mental health, dental, or sub-specialty services to District residents regardless of their ability to pay;

"(B) A Department of Health program;

"(C) A Department of Behavioral Health program;

"(D) A private practice setting that serves residents of a Medically Underserved Area, and accepts a minimum percentage or total of patients, as determined by the Director, participating in Medicare, Medicaid, HealthCare Alliance, or similar public insurance programs at a threshold determined by the Department of Health; or

"(E) Any other District program designated by the Director as a service obligation site.".

(b) Section 2 (D.C. Official Code § 7-751.03) is amended as follows:

"(6) The Director may impose additional requirements regarding the location of private practices, or the acceptance of insurance types among those practices, as the Director deems appropriate to support the goal of an equitable distribution of healthcare providers among District residents.".

(b) Section 8 (D.C. Official Code § 7-751.07) is amended as follows:

(1) Subsection (a)(2) is amended to read as follows:

"(2)(A) Full-time participants shall provide service of at least 1,800 hours per year. On-call status shall not count toward the annual 1,800 hour requirement. Exceptions to the 1,800 hour annual requirement or the on-call provision of this subparagraph may be approved by the Director prior to placement.

"(B) Part-time participants shall provide service of at least 900 hours per year,. On-call status does not count toward the annual 900 hour requirement. Exceptions to the 900 hour annual requirement or the on-call provision of this subparagraph may be approved by the Director prior to placement.".

(c) Section 9 (D.C. Official Code § 7-751.08) is amended as follows:

(1) The lead-in language of subsection (a) is amended by striking the phrase "Physicians and dentists shall be eligible" and inserting the phrase "Physicians and dentists who are full-time participants in the Program shall be eligible" in its place.

(2) The lead-in language of subsection (a-1) is amended to read as follows:

"(a-1) Physicians who are full-time participants in the Program and who specialize and practice in obstetrics and gynecology, psychiatry, or another medical specialty identified by the Director or who sub-specialize and practice in oncology, cardiology, neurology, infectious diseases, pulmonary diseases, nephrology, endocrinology, podiatry, ophthalmology, or another medical sub-specialty identified by the Director shall be eligible to have 100% of their total debt, not to exceed $200,000, repaid by the Program over 4 years of service; provided, that the participants provide full-time service in Ward 7 or 8. For each year of participation, the Mayor shall issue a schedule for the Program to repay loan amounts for full time participants.".

(3) The lead-in language of subsection (b) is amended by striking the phrase "Other health professionals shall be eligible" and inserting the phrase "Other health professionals who are full-time participants in the Program shall be eligible" in its place.

(4) New subsections (d), (e), (f), (g), (h) and (i) are added to read as follows: I

"(d) Physicians and dentists who are part-time participants in the Program shall be eligible to have 100% of their total debt, not to exceed $60,000, repaid by the Program over 4 years of service. For each year of participation, the Mayor shall issue a schedule for the Program to repay loan amounts for part-time participants.".

"(e) Physicians who are part-time participants engaged in the practice of sub-specialties shall be eligible to have 100% of their total debt, not to exceed $100,000, repaid by the Program over 4 years of service; provided, that the participants provide full-time service in Ward 7 or 8. For each year of participation, the Mayor shall issue a schedule for physicians who are engaged in sub-specialty practice, the Program to repay loan amounts for this category of part-time participants.".

"(f) Other health professionals who are part-time participants shall be eligible to have 100% of their total debt, not to exceed $33,000, repaid by the Program over 4 years of service. The Mayor shall issue a schedule for this category of part-time participants.

"(g) The Director may only add to the list of priority specialties or sub-specialties set forth in subsections (a-1) and (e) of this section based on the health care needs of District residents.

(h) "Specialty" means physicians who specialize and practice in obstetrics and gynecology, psychiatry, or another medical specialty identified by the Director.

(i) "Sub-specialty professionals" means physicians who practice in oncology, cardiology, neurology, infectious diseases, pulmonary diseases, nephrology, endocrinology, podiatry, ophthalmology, or another medical sub-specialty identified by the Director.

Sec. 10. Rulemaking authority.

The Mayor may issue rules to implement this act.

Sec. 11. Fiscal impact statement.

The Council adopts the fiscal impact statement of the Budget Director as the fiscal impact statement required by section 4a of the General Legislative Procedures Act of 1975, approved October 16, 2006 (120 Stat. 2038; D.C. Official Code § 1-301.47a).

Sec. 10. Effective date.

This act shall take effect following approval by the Mayor (or in the event of veto by the Mayor, action by the Council to override the veto), and shall remain in effect for no longer than 90 days, as provided for emergency acts of the Council of the District of Columbia in section 412(a) of the District of Columbia Home Rule Act, approved December 24, 1973 (87 Stat. 788; D.C. Official Code § 1-204.12(a)).