WEST VIRGINIA CODE: §18C-3-3

§18C-3-3. Health Sciences Loan Repayment Program; Mental Health Provider Loan Repayment Program; establishment; administration; eligibility.

(a) There is continued a special revolving fund account under the Higher Education Policy Commission in the State Treasury known as the Health Sciences Loan Repayment Fund. The fund shall be used to accomplish the purposes of this section. The fund consists of any of the following:

(1) All unexpended health sciences loan repayment program funds on deposit in the State Treasury on the effective date of reenactment of this section;

(2) Appropriations as may be provided by the Legislature;

(3) Repayments, including interest as set by the vice chancellor for administration, collected from program award recipients who fail to practice or teach in West Virginia under the terms of an award agreement or the former health sciences scholarship program previously established by this section; and

(4) Amounts that may become available from other sources.

(b) Balances remaining in the fund at the end of the fiscal year do not expire or revert to the general revenue. All costs associated with the administration of this section shall be paid from the health sciences loan repayment fund under the direction of the Vice Chancellor for Administration.

(c) Award preference is given to West Virginia residents. An individual is eligible for consideration for a health sciences loan repayment award if the individual:

(1) Either:

(A) Is a medical student at the Marshall University School of Medicine, the West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine, or the West Virginia University School of Medicine who has participated in the match process and has been offered an internship or residency in a primary care or emergency medicine program in West Virginia; or

(B) Is enrolled in the last year of an approved education program at a public or private, non-profit West Virginia institution of higher education leading to a degree or certification in the field of nurse practitioner, nurse educator, nurse midwife, physician assistant, dentist, pharmacist, physical therapist, doctoral clinical psychologist, licensed independent clinical social worker, or other disciplines identified as shortage fields by the Vice Chancellor for Administration; and

(2) Signs an agreement to practice for at least two years in an underserved area of West

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Virginia or, if pursuing a master's degree in nursing, signs an agreement to teach at least two years for a school of nursing located in West Virginia after receiving the master's degree.

(d) Program awards shall be in an amount set by the Higher Education Policy Commission of at least $20,000 for medical and dental students and at least $10,000 for all others and shall be awarded by the Vice Chancellor for Administration, who may seek the advice of an advisory panel, from the pool of all applicants with a commitment to practice in an underserved area of West Virginia. This subsection does not grant or guarantee any applicant any right to a program award. Upon completion of the requirements stated in the service agreement, the Higher Education Policy Commission shall pay the award directly to the participant's federal student loan servicer.

(e) If a program award recipient fails to practice in an underserved area of West Virginia within six months of the completion of his or her training, or if a program award recipient fails to complete his or her training or required teaching, the Vice Chancellor for Administration shall cancel the program award.

(f) (1) There is created a mental health provider student loan repayment program to be administered by the Higher Education Policy Commission. The loan repayment program shall help repay the federal student loans for mental health providers who provide therapy and counseling services and who reside in West Virginia and work in an underserved area of West Virginia for up to three years beginning January 1, 2020. Individuals participating in the loan repayment program may be eligible to receive up to $30,000 to be dispersed as follows:

(A) A participant may receive a loan repayment program award of up to $10,000 each year in exchange for the participant completing one year of practice in an underserved area.

(B) A participant may not receive a program award for more than three years of practice.

(C) Upon completion of the requirements stated in the service agreement, the Higher Education Policy Commission will pay the award directly to the participant's federal student loan servicer.

(2) There is created a special revenue fund account under the Higher Education Policy Commission in the State Treasury known as the Mental Health Provider Student Loan Repayment Fund. The fund shall be used to accomplish the purposes of this subsection. The fund shall consist of any of the following:

(A) All unexpended funds in the Mental Health Provider Student Loan Repayment fund on deposit in the State Treasury on the effective date of the reenactment of this section;

(B) Appropriations as may be provided by the Legislature;

(C) Repayments, including interest as set by the Vice Chancellor for Administration,

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collected from program award recipients who fail to practice in West Virginia under the terms of the practice agreement or the mental health provider loan repayment program previously established by this section; and

(D) Amounts that may become available from other sources.

(3) Balances remaining in the fund at the end of the fiscal year do not expire or revert to the general revenue.

(g) Rule. — The Higher Education Policy Commission shall promulgate a rule pursuant to §29A-3A-1 *et seq*. of this code to implement and administer this section.

(h) As used in this section:

(1) "Training" means:

(A) The entire degree program or certification program for nurse midwives, nurse practitioners, nurse educators, physician assistants, dentists, pharmacists, physical therapists, doctoral clinical psychologists, licensed independent clinical social workers, and other disciplines identified as shortage fields by the Vice Chancellor for Administration; or

(B) Completion of a degree program and an approved residency/internship program for students pursuing a degree in medicine or osteopathy, or as otherwise may be designated for such students in the rule required by this section.

(2) "Underserved area" means any primary care health professional shortage area located in the state as determined by the Bureau for Public Health or any additional health professional shortage area, including an emergency medicine professional, determined by the Vice Chancellor for Administration.

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