

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## SSB 5615

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Synopsis as Enacted

**Brief Description:** Concerning the health professional loan repayment and scholarship program.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Higher Education (originally sponsored by Senators Frockt, Becker, Cleveland, Keiser, Kohl-Welles, Schlicher, Kline, Conway and Chase).

**Senate Committee on Health Care**  
**Senate Committee on Higher Education**  
**House Committee on Higher Education**  
**House Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Education**

**Background:** The health professional loan repayment and scholarship program was created for credentialed health professionals serving in health professional shortage areas. The program is administered by the Student Financial Assistance Office (Office), which is overseen by the Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC).

A health professional shortage area is defined as those areas where health care professionals are in short supply as a result of geographic maldistribution or as the result of a short supply of health care professionals in specialty health care areas, and where vacancies exist in serious numbers that jeopardize patient care and pose a threat to the public health and safety.

In administering the health professional loan repayment and scholarship program, the Office must:

- select credentialed health care professionals to participate in the loan repayment portion of the loan repayment and scholarship program and select eligible students to participate in the scholarship portion of the loan repayment and scholarship program;
- adopt rules and develop guidelines to administer the program;
- collect and manage repayments from participants who do not meet their service obligations under this chapter;
- publicize the program, particularly to maximize participation among individuals in shortage areas and among populations expected to experience the greatest growth in the workforce;
- solicit and accept grants and donations from public and private sources for the program; and
- develop criteria for a contract for service in lieu of the service obligation where appropriate, that may be a combination of service and payment.

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

The Office must also create a planning committee to assist it in developing criteria for the selection of participants. The committee includes representatives from the Department of Health, the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), health care facilities, provider groups, consumers, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, and other agencies and organizations.

The Office, in consultation with DSHS, must: establish annual award amounts for each credentialed health care profession which must be based upon an assessment of reasonable annual eligible expenses involved in training and education for each health care profession; determine any scholarship awards for prospective physicians in such a manner to require the recipients to declare an interest in serving in rural areas of Washington; establish the required service obligation for each health care profession; determine eligible education and training programs for purposes of the scholarship portion of the program; and honor loan repayment and scholarship contract terms.

A federally qualified health center is a reimbursement designation from the Bureau of Primary Health Care and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services of the United States Department of Health and Human Services. Examples of such a health center include community health centers, migrant health centers, health care for the homeless programs, and public housing primary care programs.

**Summary:** The Office must contract with a fundraiser, who is not a registered state lobbyist, to solicit and accept grants and donations from private sources for the program. The Office must use a competitive process to choose the fundraiser and the fundraiser may be paid on a sliding scale, but by no more than a maximum of 15 percent out of those raised funds.

Medical and dental students that are serving residencies are added as possible recipients of the program.

**Votes on Final Passage:**

Senate	46	1	
House	73	21	(House amended)
Senate	48	0	(Senate concurred)

**Effective:** July 28, 2013.