

# ASSEMBLY, No. 877

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## STATE OF NEW JERSEY 218th LEGISLATURE

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PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2018 SESSION

**Sponsored by:**

**Assemblywoman NANCY F. MUNOZ**

**District 21 (Morris, Somerset and Union)**

**Assemblywoman MILA M. JASEY**

**District 27 (Essex and Morris)**

**SYNOPSIS**

Establishes tuition reimbursement program for certain advanced practice nurses who provide mental health care services in underserved areas in New Jersey.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



1 AN ACT establishing a tuition reimbursement program for certain  
2 advanced practice nurses who provide mental health services in  
3 New Jersey and supplementing chapter 71C of Title 18A of the  
4 New Jersey Statutes.

5

6 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*  
7 *of New Jersey:*

8

9 1. As used in this act:

10 “Authority” means the Higher Education Student Assistance  
11 Authority.

12 “Eligible tuition expenses” means tuition expenses that were  
13 incurred by a program participant in attending an accredited  
14 advanced practice nurse program, and which were not covered by  
15 any grants or scholarships.

16 “Program” means the tuition reimbursement program for  
17 advanced practice nurses established pursuant to this act.

18 “Program participant” means an individual who is certified by  
19 the New Jersey Board of Nursing as an advanced practice nurse,  
20 and who contracts with the authority to provide mental health care  
21 services in a State underserved area in return for tuition  
22 reimbursement provided under the program.

23 “State underserved area” means a geographic area in this State  
24 which the Commissioner of Health determines on the basis of health  
25 status and economic indicators as having a shortage of medical  
26 professionals who provide mental health care services.

27

28 2. a. There is established in the Higher Education Student  
29 Assistance Authority a tuition reimbursement program for advanced  
30 practice nurses who provide mental health care services in a State  
31 underserved area. The program shall provide reimbursement to  
32 program participants for a portion of the eligible tuition expenses  
33 incurred by the participant in attending an accredited advanced  
34 practice nurse program.

35 b. A program participant shall enter into a contract with the  
36 authority for a specified number of one-year periods of service, up  
37 to four years, in which the participant agrees to engage in the full-  
38 time practice of mental health care in a State underserved area. The  
39 agreement shall specify the program participant’s dates of required  
40 service and the total amount of reimbursement of eligible tuition  
41 expenses to be received by the participant in return for service.

42 c. The tuition reimbursement for a participant under the  
43 program shall equal 25 percent of the participant’s eligible tuition  
44 expenses for the one academic year of an advanced practice nurse  
45 program in which tuition was the lowest, in return for each full year  
46 of service satisfactorily completed by the participant under the  
47 program. The total tuition reimbursement amount for a program  
48 participant, for four full years of service, shall not exceed 100

1 percent of the participant's eligible tuition expenses for the one  
2 academic year of an advanced practice nurse program in which  
3 tuition was the lowest.

4  
5 3. To be eligible to participate in the program, an applicant  
6 shall:

- 7 a. be a resident of New Jersey;
- 8 b. be certified by the New Jersey Board of Nursing as an  
9 advanced practice nurse;
- 10 c. have received specialized education or training in providing  
11 mental health care services;
- 12 d. apply for the program within one year of obtaining  
13 certification as an advanced practice nurse; and
- 14 e. agree to engage in the full-time practice of mental health  
15 care in a State underserved area for a period of one to four years in  
16 return for the tuition reimbursement provided under the program.

17  
18 4. a. The Commissioner of Health shall designate State  
19 underserved areas which have a shortage of medical professionals  
20 who provide mental health care services. In designating State  
21 underserved areas, the commissioner shall consider health status  
22 criteria and economic indicators including, but not limited to, the  
23 financial resources of the population who resides in the area under  
24 consideration, and the population's access to mental health care  
25 services.

26 b. The Commissioner of Health shall transmit to the authority a  
27 list of the State underserved areas and the projected number of  
28 mental health care providers needed in each area.

29  
30 5. The contract entered into between a program participant and  
31 the authority pursuant to section 2 of this act shall require a  
32 program participant to:

- 33 a. charge for professional services at the usual and customary  
34 rate prevailing in the State underserved area, but allow a patient  
35 who is unable to pay that charge to pay at a reduced rate or receive  
36 care at no charge;
- 37 b. not discriminate against any patient in the provision of  
38 mental health care services on the basis of that person's ability to  
39 pay or source of payment; and
- 40 c. agree not to impose any charge in excess of the limiting fee  
41 for a service, as determined by the United States Secretary of  
42 Health and Human Services, to a recipient of benefits under the  
43 federal Medicare program established pursuant to Pub.L.89-97 (42  
44 U.S.C. s.1395 et seq.).

45  
46 6. A program participant, as a condition of participation, shall  
47 be required to adhere to performance standards established by the

1 authority. The standards shall include, but not be limited to,  
2 requirements that a program participant:  
3 a. maintain residency in the State;  
4 b. maintain certification to practice as an advanced practice  
5 nurse in the State;  
6 c. remain current with payments on any student loans;  
7 d. maintain satisfactory performance of services rendered in a  
8 State underserved area; and  
9 e. report to the authority, on a form and in a manner prescribed  
10 by the authority, on the program participant's performance of  
11 services rendered prior to reimbursement of tuition under the  
12 program.

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14 7. An individual who is participating in the Primary Care  
15 Practitioner Loan Redemption Program, N.J.S.18A:71C-32 et seq.,  
16 or in the federally administered National Health Service Corps Loan  
17 Repayment Program, section 338B of the Public Health Service Act  
18 (42 U.S.C. s.2541-1), shall not be eligible to participate  
19 simultaneously in the tuition reimbursement program established  
20 pursuant to this act.

21  
22 8. The authority shall promulgate regulations pursuant to the  
23 "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et  
24 seq.), necessary to effectuate the provisions of this act.

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26 9. This act shall take effect immediately.

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29 STATEMENT

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31 This bill establishes a tuition reimbursement program for  
32 advanced practice nurses who provide mental health care services in  
33 order to address a shortage of mental health care access in certain  
34 areas of the State.

35 Under the bill, the Commissioner of Health will designate, on the  
36 basis of health status and economic indicators, geographic areas of  
37 the State which have a shortage of medical professionals who  
38 provide mental health care services. The program will provide  
39 reimbursement of a portion of tuition expenses in attending an  
40 accredited advanced practice nurse program to advanced practice  
41 nurses who agree to provide mental health care services in one of  
42 these State underserved areas for a period of one to four years. A  
43 program participant must: (1) be a State resident; (2) be certified  
44 by the New Jersey Board of Nursing as an advanced practice nurse;  
45 (3) have specialized education or training in mental health care; and  
46 (4) apply for the program within one year of obtaining certification  
47 as an advanced practice nurse.

1 Program participants will enter into a contract with the Higher  
2 Education Student Assistance Authority (HESAA) for a specified  
3 number of one-year periods of service, up to four years, in which  
4 the participant agrees to engage in the full-time practice of mental  
5 health care in a State underserved area. In return for this  
6 commitment, a portion of the participant's tuition expenses in  
7 attending an accredited advanced practice nurse program will be  
8 reimbursed. Tuition reimbursement will equal 25 percent of the  
9 participant's eligible tuition expenses for the one academic year of  
10 an advanced practice nurse program in which tuition was the  
11 lowest, in return for each full year of service under the program.  
12 The maximum total tuition reimbursement for a participant for four  
13 years of service will be 100 percent of the participant's eligible  
14 tuition expenses for the one academic year of an advanced practice  
15 nurse program in which tuition was the lowest.

16 Under the bill, participants in the program will be required to  
17 adhere to certain terms and standards, including charging for  
18 professional services at the usual and customary rates, allowing  
19 patients who are unable to pay that charge to pay a reduced rate or  
20 receive care at no charge, and not discriminating against any patient  
21 on the basis of ability to pay. Participants will also be required to  
22 maintain their State residency and certification to practice as an  
23 advanced practice nurse, remain current with payments on any  
24 student loans, maintain satisfactory performance of services, and  
25 report to HESAA on the performance of services rendered prior to  
26 receiving tuition reimbursement.