

ASSEMBLY, No. 877

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 218th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2018 SESSION

Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman NANCY F. MUNOZ

District 21 (Morris, Somerset and Union)

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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.

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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.

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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.).

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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.

13
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.

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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.