

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2017

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SENATE BILL DRS35337-BCza-5*

Short Title: Rural Hlth Loan Funds/Target for Rural Areas. (Public)

Sponsors: Senators Curtis, McInnis, and Britt (Primary Sponsors).

Referred to:

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT APPROPRIATING FUNDS TO THE OFFICE OF RURAL HEALTH,
3 DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, FOR THE STATE LOAN
4 REPAYMENT PROGRAM AND DIRECTING THE OFFICE OF RURAL HEALTH,
5 DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, TO ENSURE ITS LOAN
6 REPAYMENT PROGRAM IS TARGETED TO BENEFIT HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS
7 IN RURAL NORTH CAROLINA, INCLUDING IDENTIFYING THE NEED FOR
8 DENTISTS IN RURAL AREAS AND TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE
9 JOINT LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN
10 SERVICES, AS RECOMMENDED BY THE LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH
11 COMMISSION.

12 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

13 **SECTION 1.** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Office of Rural
14 Health, Department of Health and Human Services, the sum of three million dollars (\$3,000,000)
15 for the 2018-2019 fiscal year. This funding shall be used to supplement current funding for the
16 North Carolina State Loan Repayment Program and this additional funding shall be recurring.
17 Eight hundred thousand dollars (\$800,000) of the three million dollars (\$3,000,000) shall be used
18 for repayment of loans owed by physician assistants and nurse practitioners who provide primary
19 care services in rural areas of the State.

20 **SECTION 2.(a)** The Office of Rural Health, Department of Health and Human
21 Services, is directed to structure the North Carolina State Loan Repayment Program so that it is
22 aligned with all of the following goals:

- 23 (1) The Program is targeted to increase the number of health care providers in
24 rural areas of the State.
25 (2) The Program is coordinated with the National Health Service Corps and
26 Federal Loan Repayment programs, as well as any other publicly or privately
27 funded programs, to maximize funding in order to increase the number of
28 health care providers in rural areas of the State.
29 (3) The Program encourages both recruitment and retention of health care
30 providers in rural areas of the State.

31 **SECTION 2.(b)** The Office of Rural Health, Department of Health and Human
32 Services, is directed to work with data from the Cecil G. Sheps Center for Health Services
33 Research, and other sources, to identify the need for dentists in rural areas in North Carolina and
34 to develop a recommendation to target loan repayment funds for dentists in rural areas that have
35 been identified as having the greatest need for dentists.



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1 **SECTION 2.(c)** On or before October 1, 2018, the Office of Rural Health,
2 Department of Health and Human Services, shall provide an interim report to the Joint
3 Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services on the actions required by this
4 section. On or before October 1, 2019, the Office of Rural Health, Department of Health and
5 Human Services, shall provide a final report to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on
6 Health and Human Services on the actions required by this section.
7 **SECTION 3.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2018.