

STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2nd Session of the 50th Legislature (2006)

HOUSE BILL 2623

By: Walker

AS INTRODUCED

An Act relating to professions and occupations; enacting the Oklahoma Dental Loan Repayment Act; stating legislative findings; stating purpose; providing for administration of the Oklahoma Dental Care Loan Assistance Repayment Program; requiring report; specifying requirements of act; providing for codification; and providing an effective date.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

SECTION 1. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 328.53 of Title 59, unless there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Oklahoma Dental Loan Repayment Act".

SECTION 2. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 328.54 of Title 59, unless there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

A. The Legislature recognizes that there is a need to:

1. Upgrade the availability of quality dental care services for the people of Oklahoma;

2. Improve the balance of dental manpower distribution in the state by geographic location; and

3. Increase access to dental care to those who are dependent on the state for necessary dental care.

B. The purpose of the Oklahoma Dental Loan Repayment Act shall be to:

1. Increase the number of dentists serving and caring for those dependent upon the state for dental care; and

2. Ensure that dental care and services are accessible throughout the state, and specifically, that quality dental care and services be accessible to underserved dental areas in rural and metropolitan areas of the state, and to those dependent upon the state for dental care.

SECTION 3. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 328.55 of Title 59, unless there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

A. 1. The State Department of Health shall administer the Oklahoma Dental Care Loan Assistance Repayment Program.

2. The Program, depending upon available funding, shall provide educational loan repayment assistance for up to five Oklahoma licensed dentists per year.

3. Each award shall be for a two-year period and shall be distributed to the participant by drafts made payable to the participant and the appropriate loan agency in equal monthly disbursements, not to exceed Two Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$2,500.00). Prior to any disbursement, the Department shall certify and properly review monthly reports submitted by the participating dentist detailing performance of activities in accordance with the Oklahoma Dental Loan Repayment Act.

4. At the conclusion of the two-year period, the Department may review the performance in the Program of the participating dentist to determine whether an award may be granted for an additional year pursuant to rules promulgated by the Department.

B. The dentists participating in the Program shall agree to provide dental care and services in a designated dental health professional shortage area (DHPSA) of the state or agree to provide dental care and services to Medicaid recipients as authorized by the Oklahoma Health Care Authority. The Department shall be responsible

for ensuring that at least thirty percent (30%) of the patients treated by the dentist will be Medicaid recipients.

C. A dentist shall be eligible to participate in the loan repayment program if the dentist:

1. Is a new dental school graduate who is self-employed.

Preference will be given to graduates of the University of Oklahoma College of Dentistry;

2. Is licensed to practice dentistry in Oklahoma; and

3. Has demonstrated financial need.

D. The dentist shall execute a contract with the Department for a two-year period to provide either dental services in a designated dental health professional shortage area or agree that thirty percent (30%) of his or her patients will be Medicaid recipients.

E. If the dentist does not fulfill the service obligation, the Department may collect from the participant the entire amount of loan payments made under the Program plus interest.

F. The Department shall present a report on the operation of the Program to the Governor, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the President Pro Tempore of the Senate within one (1) month of the beginning of each regular session of the Legislature including, but not limited to, the progress made in accomplishing the goal of the Program.

SECTION 4. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 328.56 of Title 59, unless there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

The amount of the award of educational loan repayment assistance shall not exceed any maximum or be less than any minimum amount as promulgated by rules of the State Board of Health pursuant to the Oklahoma Dental Loan Repayment Act. The actual amount of the award shall be based upon a determination of:

1. Actual funds available to the Program for expenditure; and

2. The existing student loan indebtedness of the participating dentist.

SECTION 5. This act shall become effective November 1, 2006.

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