

THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, April 15, 2008

Committee Substitute for
ENGROSSED
Senate Bill No. 1687

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR ENGROSSED SENATE BILL NO. 1687 - By:
PADDACK of the Senate and COX, BRADDOCK AND SHUMATE of the House.

An Act relating to higher education; establishing the Oklahoma Health Care Workers and Educators Assistance Program; stating purpose and priority for assistance; stating eligibility for program and awards; providing for administration of program; authorizing Health Care Workforce Resources Board to enter into certain agreement; authorizing award of certain scholarships contingent on availability of funds; providing for codification; providing an effective date; and declaring an emergency.

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

1 SECTION 1. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified in the Oklahoma
2 Statutes as Section 2640 of Title 70, unless there is created a duplication in numbering,
3 reads as follows:
4 A. There is hereby established the Oklahoma Health Care Workers and Educators
5 Assistance Program. The purpose of the program shall be to encourage persons to enter
6 nursing and allied health careers within this state. Priority in awarding assistance is
7 intended to go toward those career fields in which there is an urgent need for qualified
8 employees to provide health care services or in career fields in which a shortage of
9 qualified employees is projected to exist in the future.

1 B. Only students who are residents of this state shall be eligible to participate in
2 the Oklahoma Health Care Workers and Educators Assistance Program.

3 C. Only students of accredited or recognized health care programs or colleges and
4 universities shall be eligible for awards from the Oklahoma Health Care Workers and
5 Educators Assistance Program.

6 D. The Oklahoma Health Care Workers and Educators Assistance Program shall
7 be administered by the Health Care Workforce Resources Board. The Board is
8 authorized to enter into an agreement with the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher
9 Education for fiscal services as may be necessary to implement the provisions of this
10 section.

11 E. The Health Care Workforce Resources Board shall implement the provisions of
12 this section in the most balanced, efficient, and effective means necessary to meet the
13 following priorities:

14 1. Create additional nursing or allied health faculty by providing scholarships to
15 cover individuals' costs of gaining the advanced degrees necessary to serve as faculty
16 members in nursing and allied health education programs;

17 2. Expand and modernize learning environments by providing matching grants to
18 nursing and allied health education institutions to increase the number of clinical
19 opportunities, and to better utilize online and distance learning, simulations, and other
20 innovative methods to provide education and training; and

1 3. Attract more students in nursing and allied health careers by providing
2 scholarships to cover individuals' costs of gaining degrees or certifications necessary to
3 prepare them for nursing and allied health occupations.

4 F. The Board shall make an annual public declaration of which nursing and allied
5 health care education fields have been identified for priority funding due to either an
6 urgent need for qualified employees or due to a determination of a future shortage of
7 qualified employees.

8 G. Scholarships established through the Oklahoma Health Care Workers and
9 Educators Assistance Program may be awarded contingent on funds made available
10 through the State Regents for Higher Education.

11 SECTION 2. This act shall become effective July 1, 2008.

12 SECTION 3. It being immediately necessary for the preservation of the public
13 peace, health and safety, an emergency is hereby
14 declared to exist, by reason whereof this act shall take effect and be in full force from and
15 after its passage and approval.

16 COMMITTEE REPORT BY: COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, dated 04-14-08 - DO
17 PASS, As Amended and Coauthored.