

SB 1687

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THE STATE SENATE
Monday, February 25, 2008

Senate Bill No. 1687
As Amended

SENATE BILL NO. 1687 - By: PADDACK of the Senate and COX and BRADDOCK of the House.

[higher education - Oklahoma Health Care Workers and Educators Assistance Program - codification - effective date - emergency]

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 2640 of Title 70, unless there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

A. There is hereby established the Oklahoma Health Care Workers and Educators Assistance Program. The purpose of the program shall be to encourage persons to enter nursing and allied health careers within this state. Priority in awarding assistance is intended to go toward those career fields in which there is an urgent need for qualified employees to provide health care services or in career fields in which a shortage of qualified employees is projected to exist in the future.

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

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

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

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

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

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

22 3. Attract more students in nursing and allied health careers
23 by providing scholarships to cover individuals' costs of gaining

1 degrees or certifications necessary to prepare them for nursing and
2 allied health occupations.

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

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

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

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

17 COMMITTEE REPORT BY: COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS, dated 2-20-08 - DO
18 PASS, As Amended and Coauthored.