

1 STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2 2nd Session of the 51st Legislature (2008)

3 SENATE BILL 1687

By: Paddack

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6 AS INTRODUCED

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

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

18 SECTION 1. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
19 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 2640 of Title 70, unless there
20 is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

21 A. There is hereby established the Oklahoma Health Care Workers
22 and Educators Assistance Program. The purpose of the program shall
23 be to encourage persons to enter nursing and allied health careers
24 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

1 fields in which a shortage of qualified employees is projected to
2 exist in the future.

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

6 C. Only students of accredited or recognized health care
7 programs or colleges and universities shall be eligible for award
8 from the Oklahoma Health Care Workers and Educators Assistance
9 Program.

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

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

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

22 2. Expand and modernize learning environments by providing
23 matching grants to nursing and allied health education institutions
24 to increase the number of clinical opportunities, and to better

1 utilize online and distance learning, simulations, and other
2 innovative methods to provide education and training; and

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

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

12 G. Scholarships established through the Oklahoma Health Care
13 Workers and Educators Assistance Program may be awarded contingent
14 on funds made available through the State Regents for Higher
15 Education.

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

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

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