

ENROLLED SENATE
BILL NO. 310

By: Paddack, Burrage, Garrison
and Bass of the Senate

and

Cox and Pittman of the
House

An Act relating to schools; amending Section 5, Chapter 387, O.S.L. 2008 (70 O.S. Supp. 2008, Section 2640), which relates to the Oklahoma Health Care Workers and Educators Assistance Program; making award of scholarships contingent on availability of funds; providing an effective date; and declaring an emergency.

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

SECTION 1. AMENDATORY Section 5, Chapter 387, O.S.L. 2008 (70 O.S. Supp. 2008, Section 2640), is amended to read as follows:

Section 2640. 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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

G. ~~Implementation of the provisions of this section shall be~~ Scholarships established through the Oklahoma Health Care Workers and Educators Assistance Program may be awarded contingent on funds made available through the State Regents for Higher Education.

SECTION 2. This act shall become effective July 1, 2009.

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

Passed the Senate the 4th day of May, 2009.

Presiding Officer of the Senate

Passed the House of Representatives the 21st day of April, 2009.

Presiding Officer of the House
of Representatives