

CHAPTER 126

AN ACT establishing a tuition reimbursement program for certain psychiatrists who work in New Jersey and supplementing chapter 71C of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes.

BE IT ENACTED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

C.18A:71C-59 Definitions relative to tuition reimbursement for certain psychiatrists.

1. As used in this act:

“Authority” means the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority.

“Eligible tuition expenses” means tuition expenses that were incurred by a program participant in attending an accredited medical school and which were not covered by any grants or scholarships.

“Program” means the tuition reimbursement program for psychiatrists established pursuant to this act.

“Program participant” means a psychiatrist who contracts with the authority to provide mental health care services in a State underserved area or in a State psychiatric hospital in return for tuition reimbursement provided under the program.

“State psychiatric hospital” means a State psychiatric hospital operated by the Department of Human Services and listed in R.S.30:1-7.

“State underserved area” means a geographic area in this State which the Commissioner of Health, in consultation with the Commissioner of Human Services, determines on the basis of health status and economic indicators as having a physician shortage in the specialty of psychiatry.

C.18A:71C-60 Tuition reimbursement for certain psychiatrists.

2. a. There is established in the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority a tuition reimbursement program for psychiatrists who provide mental health care services in a State underserved area or in a State psychiatric hospital. The program shall provide reimbursement to program participants for a portion of the eligible tuition expenses incurred by the participant in attending medical school.

b. A program participant shall enter into a contract with the authority for a specified number of one-year periods of service, up to four years, in which the participant agrees to engage in the full-time practice of psychiatry in a State underserved area or in a State psychiatric hospital. The agreement shall specify the program participant’s dates of required service and the total amount of reimbursement of eligible tuition expenses to be received by the participant in return for service.

c. The tuition reimbursement for a participant under the program shall equal 25 percent of the participant’s eligible tuition expenses for the one academic year of medical school attendance in which tuition was the lowest, in return for each full year of service satisfactorily completed by the participant under the program. The total tuition reimbursement amount for a program participant, for four full years of service, shall not exceed 100 percent of the participant’s eligible tuition expenses for the one academic year of medical school attendance in which tuition was the lowest.

C.18A:71C-61 Eligibility for program.

3. To be eligible to participate in the program, an applicant shall:

a. be a resident of New Jersey;

b. be a State-licensed physician who has successfully completed all educational and residency training requirements for the practice of psychiatry;

c. apply for the program within one year of completing an accredited residency training program in psychiatry, or within one year of completing an accredited fellowship in child and adolescent psychiatry; and

d. agree to practice full-time as a psychiatrist in a State underserved area or in a State psychiatric hospital for a period of one to four years in return for the tuition reimbursement provided under the program.

C.18A:71C-62 Designation of underserved areas, list of available positions in State psychiatric hospitals.

4. a. The Commissioner of Health, in consultation with the Commissioner of Human Services, shall designate State underserved areas which have a shortage of psychiatrists. In designating State underserved areas, the commissioner shall consider health status criteria and economic indicators including, but not limited to, the financial resources of the population who resides in the area under consideration, and the population's access to mental health care services.

b. The Commissioner of Health shall transmit to the authority a list of the State underserved areas and the projected number of psychiatrists needed in each area.

c. The Commissioner of Human Services shall transmit to the authority a list of the State psychiatric hospitals and the projected number of psychiatrists needed in each hospital.

C.18A:71C-63 Contract for program participant.

5. The contract entered into between a program participant and the authority pursuant to section 2 of this act shall require a program participant to:

a. charge for professional services at the usual and customary rate prevailing in the State underserved area, but allow a patient who is unable to pay that charge to pay at a reduced rate or receive care at no charge;

b. not discriminate against any patient in the provision of mental health care services on the basis of that person's ability to pay or source of payment; and

c. agree not to impose any charge in excess of the limiting fee for a service, as determined by the United States Secretary of Health and Human Services, to a recipient of benefits under the federal Medicare program established pursuant to Pub.L.89-97 (42 U.S.C. s.1395 et seq.).

C.18A:71C-64 Performance standards.

6. A program participant, as a condition of participation, shall be required to adhere to performance standards established by the authority. The standards shall include, but not be limited to, requirements that a program participant:

a. maintain residency in the State;

b. maintain a license to practice medicine in the State;

c. remain current with payments on any student loans;

d. maintain satisfactory performance of services rendered in a State underserved area or in a State psychiatric hospital; and

e. report to the authority, on a form and in a manner prescribed by the authority, on the program participant's performance of services rendered prior to reimbursement of tuition under the program.

C.18A:71C-65 Ineligibility.

7. An individual who is participating in the Primary Care Practitioner Loan Redemption Program, N.J.S.18A:71C-32 et seq., or in the federally administered National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program, section 338B of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. s.2541-1), shall not be eligible to participate simultaneously in the tuition reimbursement program established pursuant to this act.

8. The authority shall promulgate regulations pursuant to the “Administrative Procedure Act,” P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), necessary to effectuate the provisions of this act.

9. This act shall take effect immediately.

Approved July 21, 2017.