

# Issue Brief – Mental Health Therapist Grant

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

DHS-09-11

## MENTAL HEALTH THERAPIST GRANT AND SCHOLARSHIP ACT

The Mental Health Therapist Grant and Scholarship program provides grants and scholarships for mental health therapists.

### OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this issue brief is to bring to the attention of the Legislature this program and its statutory requirements.

### DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

This program was created by Legislation in 1994 establishing a grant and scholarship program for mental health therapists (UCA 62A-13). The Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (DSAMH) administers the program including establishing application procedures, eligibility and selection criteria, awarding the grants or scholarships, and designating the underserved areas.

#### *Grant Program*

This program was started to increase the number of mental health therapists. The Department of Human Services (DHS) may provide grants for mental health therapists to repay educational loans in exchange for agreeing to practice for a specified time in underserved rural areas of the state.

#### *Scholarship Program*

Like the Grant Program, this program was started to increase the number of mental health therapists in underserved rural communities. DHS may award a scholarship for anyone pursuing a degree or additional course work to become a mental health therapist.

#### *Service Obligation*

The recipient of the grant or scholarship shall enter into a contract with the State. The conditions of the contract require the recipient to practice full-time for a minimum of 24 months in an approved underserved area.

If the recipient fails to meet the obligations of the contract, interest and penalties will be assessed.

#### *Reporting*

Annually before August 1, DSAMH shall submit a written report of the activities of this program to the Health and Human Services Interim Committee. The latest report can be found in **Attachment A**.

#### *Funding of the Program*

Section 62A-13-109 of the Utah Code specifically requires **that appropriations for this program shall be a separate line item to the Department of Human Services** and that the funds are non-lapsing. Currently, the funding for this program of \$28,000 in General Fund is included in the DSAMH line item in the Administration program.

### RECOMMENDATION

It is the recommendation of the Analyst that the funding for this program of \$28,000 in General Fund be transferred from the Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health and appropriated to the Mental Health Therapist Grants and Scholarships as a separate line item in the Department of Human Services to comply with statute.

