

Healthcare Workforce Financial Assistance Program – Appropriation Request; Rep. Redd

Program Purpose: to increase the number of primary care health professionals (physicians, dentists, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, mental health professionals, nurses) serving Utah’s medically underserved populations.

Background: as a state, Utah is ranked 49th nationally for its supply of primary care providers which represents a significant shortage which disproportionately impacts medically underserved populations (rural, poor, uninsured, etc.). Individuals who receive ongoing primary care (which includes preventive care) have lower health care costs (e.g., fewer hospitalizations, decreased ER use) through receipt of preventive services and better control of chronic conditions.

Many graduating health professionals have a very high debt load (average for a medical student in the US is over \$200,000) which makes loan repayment opportunities a very attractive incentive to recruit these professionals to serve in underserved communities.

Request: \$500,000 one-time

Program Budget: \$470,000 for 2-year loan repayment contracts
\$ 30,000 administrative expenses

Expected Outcome/Public Benefit: this funding will allow up to 30 additional health care providers to be recruited to underserved areas of Utah, which will provide access to primary care services for approximately 40,000 individuals.

Performance Measures:

#1 – Track the actual number of loan repayment applications received from both health professionals and underserved sites. **Target = 40.** We hope to establish a baseline of ongoing need as we progress through this second year of awards.

#2 – Track the actual number of health care professionals awarded loan repayment contracts through this program. **Target = 30.**

Current Program Status: 10 professionals were funded in 2016-2017 fiscal year with 2-year loan repayment contracts totaling \$292,681. Awards were given to the following provider types: mental health, geriatrics, family medicine, nursing, and dental. These individuals are serving in 8 different counties. Last year this program received a total of 23 applications: 10 were awarded, 8 were denied for not meeting the required qualifications, and 5 applicants withdrew their applications.