

1                   A bill to be entitled  
2           An act relating to the Dental Student Loan Repayment  
3           Program; creating s. 381.4019, F.S.; establishing the  
4           Dental Student Loan Repayment Program to support  
5           dentists who practice in public health programs  
6           located in certain underserved areas; providing  
7           definitions; requiring the Department of Health to  
8           establish the loan program; providing for the award of  
9           funds; providing the maximum number of years funds may  
10          be awarded; providing eligibility requirements;  
11          requiring the department to adopt rules; providing an  
12          effective date.

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14   Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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16           Section 1. Section 381.4019, Florida Statutes, is created  
17           to read:

18           381.4019 Dental Student Loan Repayment Program.—Subject to  
19           the availability of funds, the Legislature establishes the  
20           Dental Student Loan Repayment Program to promote access to  
21           dental care by supporting qualified dentists who treat medically  
22           underserved populations in dental health professional shortage  
23           areas or medically underserved areas. The Legislature recognizes  
24           that maintaining good oral health is integral to overall health  
25           status and that the good health of residents in this state is an

26 important contributing factor in state economic development.  
27 Better health, including better oral health, increases workplace  
28 productivity, reduces the burden of health care costs, and  
29 improves the cognitive development of children.

30 (1) As used in this section, the term:

31 (a) "Dental health professional shortage area" means a  
32 geographic area designated as such by the Health Resources and  
33 Services Administration of the United States Department of  
34 Health and Human Services.

35 (b) "Department" means the Department of Health.

36 (c) "Loan program" means the Dental Student Loan Repayment  
37 Program.

38 (d) "Medically underserved area" means a geographic area,  
39 an area having a special population, or a facility which is  
40 designated by department rule as a health professional shortage  
41 area as defined by federal regulation and which has a shortage  
42 of dental health professionals who serve Medicaid recipients and  
43 other low-income patients.

44 (e) "Public health program" means a county health  
45 department, the Children's Medical Services program, a federally  
46 funded community health center, a federally funded migrant  
47 health center, or other publicly funded or nonprofit health care  
48 program designated by the department.

49 (2) The department shall establish a dental student loan  
50 repayment program to benefit state-licensed dentists who

51 demonstrate, as required by department rule, active employment  
52 in a public health program that serves Medicaid recipients and  
53 other low-income patients and is located in a dental health  
54 professional shortage area or a medically underserved area.

55 (3) The department shall award funds from the loan program  
56 to repay the student loans of a dentist who meets the  
57 requirements of subsection (2). An award may not exceed \$50,000  
58 per year per eligible dentist.

59 (4) A participant in the loan program is eligible to  
60 receive funds for at least 1 year, up to a maximum of 5 years.  
61 The period of obligated service begins when the dentist begins  
62 employment as provided in subsection (2).

63 (5) A dentist is not eligible to participate in the loan  
64 program if:

65 (a) The dentist's employment by a public health program is  
66 terminated;

67 (b) The dentist's practice in a designated health  
68 professional shortage area or medically underserved area is  
69 terminated;

70 (c) The dentist's participation in the Florida Medicaid  
71 program is terminated; or

72 (d) The dentist knowingly fails to disclose any  
73 participation in fraudulent activity.

74 (6) The department shall adopt rules to administer the  
75 loan program.

76 | Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2018. |