

By Senator Flores

37-00468-14

2014344\_\_

1                   A bill to be entitled  
2       An act relating to dentists; creating s. 381.4019,  
3       F.S.; establishing the Dental Student Loan Repayment  
4       Program in order to encourage dentists to work in  
5       underserved areas or public health programs; providing  
6       definitions; requiring the Department of Health,  
7       certain universities, and the Florida Dental  
8       Association to develop the program; providing for the  
9       award of funds; providing the maximum number of years  
10      funds may be awarded to a dentist; providing sanctions  
11      for failure to comply with loan requirements;  
12      requiring the department to adopt rules; providing an  
13      effective date.

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

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

19       381.4019 Dental Student Loan Repayment Program.—Subject to  
20 the availability of funds, the Legislature establishes the  
21 Dental Student Loan Repayment Program in order to encourage  
22 qualified dentists to practice in medically underserved areas or  
23 public health programs in the state in which there are shortages  
24 of such practitioners.

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

26       (a) "Department" means the Department of Health.

27       (b) "Loan program" means the Dental Student Loan Repayment  
28 Program.

29       (c) "Medically underserved area" means a geographic area,

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30 an area having a special population, or a facility as designated  
31 by department rule which is a health professional shortage area  
32 as defined by federal regulations and which has a shortage of  
33 dental health professionals who serve Medicaid and other low-  
34 income patients.

35 (d) "Public health program" means a county health  
36 department, the Children's Medical Services program, a federally  
37 funded community health center, a federally funded migrant  
38 health center, or other publicly funded or nonprofit health care  
39 program designated by the department.

40 (2) The loan program shall be developed by the department  
41 in cooperation with the University of Florida College of  
42 Dentistry, the Nova Southeastern University College of Dental  
43 Medicine, the Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine School  
44 of Dental Medicine, and the Florida Dental Association.

45 (3) The department shall award funds from the loan program  
46 to repay the student loans of state-licensed dentists who commit  
47 to practice in a medically underserved area or in a public  
48 health program to serve Medicaid recipients and other low-income  
49 patients in this state.

50 (4) A participant in the loan program may receive funds for  
51 at least 1 year, up to a maximum of 4 years. The period of  
52 obligated service begins when the dentist is employed in the  
53 medically underserved area or by a public health program.

54 (5) Failure to comply with the participation requirements  
55 of the loan program shall result in ineligibility for license  
56 renewal under chapter 466. If a dentist is unable to participate  
57 for reasons of disability, the penalty is the actual amount of  
58 financial assistance provided to the dentist. Financial

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59 penalties shall be deposited into the loan program and used to  
60 provide additional funding for program participants.

61 (6) The department shall adopt rules to administer the loan  
62 program. The rules must quantify the amount of funds each  
63 dentist may receive per year of participation in the loan  
64 program.

65 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2014.