

1                   A bill to be entitled  
2           An act relating to dental services; providing  
3           legislative intent; creating s. 381.4019, F.S.;  
4           establishing the Dental Student Loan Repayment Program  
5           to support dentists who practice in public health  
6           programs located in certain underserved areas;  
7           providing definitions; requiring the Department of  
8           Health to establish a dental student loan repayment  
9           program for specified purposes; providing for the  
10          award of funds; providing the maximum number of years  
11          funds may be awarded; providing eligibility  
12          requirements; requiring the department to adopt rules;  
13          creating s. 381.40195, F.S.; providing a short title;  
14          providing definitions; requiring the Department of  
15          Health to establish the Donated Dental Services  
16          Program to provide comprehensive dental care to  
17          certain eligible individuals; requiring the department  
18          to contract with the Dental Lifeline Network or its  
19          designee to implement and administer the program;  
20          specifying minimum contractual responsibilities;  
21          requiring that the department adopt rules; providing  
22          an effective date.

23  
24   Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:  
25

26           Section 1. It is the intent of the Legislature to promote  
27 programs and initiatives that help make available preventive and  
28 educational dental services for the citizens of the state, as  
29 well as provide quality dental treatment services. The  
30 geographic characteristics among the citizens of the state are  
31 distinctive and vary from region to region, with such citizens  
32 having unique needs regarding access to dental care. The  
33 Legislature recognizes that maintaining good oral health is  
34 integral to the overall health status of individuals and that  
35 the good health of the residents of this state is an important  
36 contributing factor in economic development. Better health,  
37 including better oral health, increases workplace productivity,  
38 reduces the burden of health care costs, and improves the  
39 cognitive development of children, resulting in a reduction of  
40 missed school days.

41           Section 2. Section 381.4019, Florida Statutes, is created  
42 to read:

43           381.4019 Dental Student Loan Repayment Program.—Subject to  
44 the availability of funds, the Legislature shall establish the  
45 Dental Student Loan Repayment Program to promote access to  
46 dental care by supporting qualified dentists who treat medically  
47 underserved populations in dental health professional shortage  
48 areas or medically underserved areas.

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

50           (a) "Dental health professional shortage area" means a

51 geographic area designated as such by the Health Resources and  
52 Services Administration of the United States Department of  
53 Health and Human Services.

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

55 (c) "Loan program" means the Dental Student Loan Repayment  
56 Program.

57 (d) "Medically underserved area" means a geographic area,  
58 an area having a special population, or a facility which is  
59 designated by department rule as a health professional shortage  
60 area as defined by federal regulation and which has a shortage  
61 of dental health professionals who serve Medicaid recipients and  
62 other low-income patients.

63 (e) "Public health program" means a county health  
64 department, the Children's Medical Services program, a federally  
65 funded community health center, a federally funded migrant  
66 health center, or other publicly funded or nonprofit health care  
67 program designated by the department.

68 (2) The department shall establish a dental student loan  
69 repayment program to benefit Florida-licensed dentists who  
70 demonstrate, as required by department rule, active employment  
71 in a public health program that serves Medicaid recipients and  
72 other low-income patients and is located in a dental health  
73 professional shortage area or a medically underserved area.

74 (3) The department shall award funds from the loan program  
75 to repay the student loans of a dentist who meets the

76 requirements of subsection (2).

77 (a) An award may not exceed \$50,000 per year per eligible  
78 dentist.

79 (b) Only loans to pay the costs of tuition, books, dental  
80 equipment and supplies, uniforms, and living expenses shall be  
81 covered.

82 (c) All repayments shall be contingent upon continued  
83 proof of eligibility and shall be made directly to the holder of  
84 the loan. The state shall bear no responsibility for the  
85 collection of any interest charges or other remaining balances.

86 (d) A dentist is eligible to receive funds under the loan  
87 program for at least 1 year, up to a maximum of 5 years.

88 (e) The department shall limit the number of new dentists  
89 participating in the loan program to no more than 10 per fiscal  
90 year.

91 (4) A dentist is no longer eligible to receive funds under  
92 the loan program if the dentist:

93 (a) Is no longer employed by a public health program that  
94 meets the requirements of subsection (2).

95 (b) Ceases to participate in the Florida Medicaid program.

96 (c) Has disciplinary action taken against his or her  
97 license by the Board of Dentistry for a violation of s. 466.028.

98 (5) The department shall adopt rules to administer the  
99 loan program.

100 Section 3. Section 381.40195, Florida Statutes, is created

101 to read:

102 381.40195 Donated Dental Services Program.—

103 (1) This act may be cited as the "Donated Dental Services  
104 Act."

105 (2) As used in this section, the term:

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

107 (b) "Program" means the Donated Dental Services Program as  
108 established pursuant to subsection (3).

109 (3) The department shall establish the Donated Dental  
110 Services Program for the purpose of providing comprehensive  
111 dental care through a network of volunteer dentists and other  
112 dental providers to needy, disabled, elderly, and medically  
113 compromised individuals who cannot afford necessary treatment  
114 but are ineligible for public assistance. An eligible individual  
115 may receive treatment in a volunteer dentist's or participating  
116 dental provider's private office or at any other suitable  
117 location. An eligible individual is not required to pay any fee  
118 or cost associated with the treatment he or she receives.

119 (4) The department, in consultation with the Dental  
120 Lifeline Network or its designee, shall implement and administer  
121 the program. The department shall contract with the Dental  
122 Lifeline Network or its designee who has experience in providing  
123 similar services or administering similar programs. The contract  
124 must specify the responsibilities of the Dental Lifeline Network  
125 or its designee, which may include, but are not limited to:

126 (a) Maintaining a network of volunteer dentists and other  
127 dental providers, including, but not limited to, dental  
128 specialists and dental laboratories to provide comprehensive  
129 dental services to eligible individuals.

130 (b) Maintaining a system to refer eligible individuals to  
131 the appropriate volunteer dentist or participating dental  
132 provider.

133 (c) Developing a public awareness and marketing campaign  
134 to promote the program and educate eligible individuals about  
135 its availability and services.

136 (d) Providing the necessary administrative and technical  
137 support to administer the program.

138 (e) Submitting an annual report to the department that  
139 must include, at a minimum:

140 1. Financial data relating to administering the program.

141 2. Demographic data and other information relating to the  
142 eligible individuals who are referred to and receive treatment  
143 through the program.

144 3. Demographic data and other information relating to the  
145 volunteer dentists and participating dental providers who  
146 provide dental services through the program.

147 4. Any other data or information that the department may  
148 require.

149 (f) Performing any other program-related duties and  
150 responsibilities as required by the department.

HB 465

2019

151            (5) The department shall adopt rules to administer the  
152 program.

153            Section 4. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.