

ASSEMBLY HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 4613

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: DECEMBER 12, 2022

The Assembly Higher Education Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 4613, with committee amendments.

As amended and reported by the committee, this bill broadens eligibility for the Primary Care Practitioner Loan Redemption Program established within the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority (HESAA). The bill appropriates \$10 million to HESAA for the program.

The amended bill specifically:

- renames the program as the Health Care Professional Loan Redemption Program;
- provides for the participation in the program of psychiatrists and other health professionals working in fields designated by the Commissioner of Health for inclusion in the program;
- permits the Commissioner of Health, after consultation with the Commissioner of Labor and Workforce Development, to designate additional health care fields experiencing critical Statewide labor shortages for inclusion in the program;
- removes the requirement that a participant be employed at an approved site but provides that a minimum of 40 percent of available funds in a program year be reserved for participants employed at approved sites; and
- requires HESSA to annually submit a report on the Health Care Professional Loan Redemption Program to the Governor, and to the Legislature no later than August 1 of each year.

The current law that dedicates 25 percent of the funds annually appropriated for the Health Care Professional Loan Redemption Program to the Nursing Faculty Loan Redemption Program is maintained. However, the bill specifies that any funds dedicated to the Nursing Faculty Loan Redemption Program that are in excess of the amount necessary to satisfy qualifying applications for the program are to be reallocated to the Health Care Professional Loan Redemption Program.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amended the bill to:

- stipulate that any funds dedicated to the Nursing Faculty Loan Redemption Program in excess of the amount necessary to satisfy qualifying applications for the program will be reallocated to the Health Care Professional Loan Redemption Program upon the recommendation of the Executive Director of HESSA, subject to the approval of the Director of the Division of Budget and Accounting;
- require HESSA to submit an annual report on the Health Care Professional Loan Redemption Program to the Governor, and to the Legislature which includes: the total number of participants receiving loan redemption, the total amount of loan redemption provided, a profile of program participants, the average annual loan redemption amount and the five-year average loan redemption amount, and the effect of the program on meeting the demand for labor in primary care, psychiatry, and other qualifying health care fields in the State; and
- make minor technical changes.