II

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 462

To amend the Public Health Service Act to modify the loan repayment program for the substance use disorder treatment workforce to relieve workforce shortages.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

FEBRUARY 16, 2023

Ms. SMITH (for herself, Ms. MURKOWSKI, and Ms. HASSAN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

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A BILL

To amend the Public Health Service Act to modify the loan repayment program for the substance use disorder treatment workforce to relieve workforce shortages.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Mental Health Professionals Workforce Shortage Loan Repayment Act of 2023''.

SEC. 2. LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM FOR SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER TREATMENT WORKFORCE.

Section 781 of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 295h) is amended—

(1) In subsection (a)(2), by inserting ", or the individuals each agree to complete a period of service in a mental health professional shortage area" before the period;

(2) in subsection (c)—

(A) by redesignating paragraphs (2) through (5) as paragraphs (3) through (6), respectively; and

(B) by inserting after paragraph (1), the following:

"(2) Any loan used for obtaining a degree from an accredited institution of higher education for education in mental health or a related field leading to a master's degree, leading to a doctoral degree, or consisting of post-doctoral study.";

(3) by striking subsection (d) and inserting the following:

"(d) REQUIREMENTS OF SERVICE.—Any individual receiving payments under this program as required by an agreement under subsection (a) shall agree—

"(1) to an annual commitment to full-time employment, with no more than 1 year passing between any 2 years of covered employment, in substance use disorder treatment employment in the United States in—

"(A) a Mental Health Professional Shortage Area, as designated under section 332; or

"(B) a county (or a municipality, if not contained within any county) where the mean drug overdose death rate per 100,000 people over the past 3 years for which official data is available from the State, is higher than the most recent available national average overdose death rate per 100,000 people, as reported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; or

"(2) to up to 6 years of full-time employment, with no more than 1 year passing between any 2 years of covered employment, as a behavioral or mental health professional in the United States in—

"(A) a mental health professional shortage area of greatest need, as determined by the Secretary for the purposes of this section, as designated under section 332; or

"(B) any facility, program, center, or clinic as determined appropriate by the Secretary for purposes of this section because of a shortage of mental health professionals, including private physician practices and other medical facilities designated under section 332(a) as having such a shortage.'';

(4) in subsection (e)(2), by inserting ''338B, 338I, or 846 of this Act, section'' after ''under section'';

(5) in subsection (h)(2), by inserting ''and behavioral and mental health services employees'' after ''treatment employees'';

(6) in subsection (i)—

(A) by redesignating paragraphs (1) through (3) as paragraphs (2) through (4), respectively; and

(B) by inserting before paragraph (2) (as so redesignated), the following:

''(1) The term 'behavioral and mental health professional' means health service psychologists, licensed clinical social workers, licensed professional counselors, marriage and family therapists, psychiatric nurse specialists, and psychiatrists.''; and

(7) in subsection (j). by striking ''$25,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023'' and in-

serting “$50,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2023 through 2032”.

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