

By Senator Hooper

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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 a nonprofit organization to implement
19 and administer the program; specifying minimum
20 contractual responsibilities; requiring the department
21 to adopt rules; providing an effective date.

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

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25 Section 1. It is the intent of the Legislature to promote
26 programs and initiatives that help make available preventive and
27 educational dental services for the citizens of the state, as
28 well as provide quality dental treatment services. The
29 geographic characteristics among the citizens of the state are

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30 distinctive and vary from region to region, with such citizens
31 having unique needs regarding access to dental care. The
32 Legislature recognizes that maintaining good oral health is
33 integral to the overall health status of individuals and that
34 the good health of the residents of this state is an important
35 contributing factor in economic development. Better health,
36 including better oral health, increases workplace productivity,
37 reduces the burden of health care costs, and improves the
38 cognitive development of children, resulting in a reduction of
39 missed school days.

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

42 381.4019 Dental Student Loan Repayment Program.—Subject to
43 the availability of funds, the Legislature shall establish the
44 Dental Student Loan Repayment Program to promote access to
45 dental care by supporting qualified dentists who treat medically
46 underserved populations in dental health professional shortage
47 areas or medically underserved areas.

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

49 (a) "Dental health professional shortage area" means a
50 geographic area designated as such by the Health Resources and
51 Services Administration of the United States Department of
52 Health and Human Services.

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

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

56 (d) "Medically underserved area" means a geographic area,
57 an area having a special population, or a facility which is
58 designated by department rule as a health professional shortage

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59 area as defined by federal regulation and which has a shortage
60 of dental health professionals who serve Medicaid recipients and
61 other low-income patients.

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

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

73 (3) The department shall award funds from the loan program
74 to repay the student loans of a dentist who meets the
75 requirements of subsection (2).

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

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

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

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

87 (e) The department shall limit the number of new dentists

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88 participating in the loan program to no more than 10 per fiscal
89 year.

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

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

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

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

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

99 Section 3. Section 381.40195, Florida Statutes, is created
100 to read:

101 381.40195 Donated Dental Services Program.-

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

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

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

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

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

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117 or cost associated with the treatment he or she receives.

118 (4) The department shall implement and administer the
119 program. The department shall contract with a nonprofit
120 organization that has experience in providing similar services
121 or administering similar programs. The contract must specify the
122 responsibilities of the nonprofit organization, which may
123 include, but are not limited to:

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

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

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

134 (d) Providing the necessary administrative and technical
135 support to administer the program.

136 (e) Submitting an annual report to the department which
137 must include, at a minimum:

138 1. Financial data relating to administering the program.
139 2. Demographic data and other information relating to the
140 eligible individuals who are referred to and receive treatment
141 through the program.

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

145 4. Any other data or information that the department may

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146 require.

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

149 (5) The department shall adopt rules to administer the
150 program.

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