



H.B. 87

126th General Assembly
(As Introduced)

**Reps. Willamowski, C. Evans, McGregor, Seitz, Perry, S. Smith, Hartnett,
Taylor, Martin, Hagan, Reidelbach, Hood**

BILL SUMMARY

- For purposes of the Physician Loan Repayment Program, requires the Director of Health to designate all state correctional institutions operated by the Department of Rehabilitation and Correction as "health resource shortage areas."

CONTENT AND OPERATION

Background--Physician Loan Repayment Program

(R.C. 3702.71, 3702.73, 3702.74, and 3702.75 (all not in the bill))

In 1993, the General Assembly created the Physician Loan Repayment Program.¹ Under the Program, primary care physicians² agree to provide primary

¹ *The Physician Loan Repayment Program was authorized by H.B. 478 of the 119th General Assembly (R.C. 3702.71 through 3702.81).*

² *A "primary care physician" is an individual authorized under Ohio law to practice medicine and surgery or osteopathic medicine and surgery who is Board-certified or Board-eligible in a primary care specialty. (R.C. 3702.71(A).) The terms "Board-certified" and "Board-eligible" are not defined in the Revised Code. However, according to the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS), a physician who is Board-certified is a physician who has completed an approved educational training program and an evaluation process including an examination designed to assess the knowledge, skills, and experience necessary to provide quality patient care in that specialty. A physician who is Board-eligible is in the process of becoming Board-certified, although the ABMS discourages the use of this description. ABMS, FAQs (visited Mar. 2, 2004) <<http://www.abms.org/faq.asp#WBE>>.*

care services³ 40 hours per week in a "health resource shortage area." They also agree to treat a percentage of Medicaid and Medicare patients equal to the percentage in their service areas. In return for their service, the physicians receive repayment of up to \$80,000 of medical school debt (\$20,000 annually over a four-year period).⁴

Program participants contract to provide an initial two years of service, then either enter into one follow-up contract for two years of service or two follow-up contracts for one year of service each.⁵ The Director of Health may approve a physician for the Program only if the General Assembly appropriates funds for the Program, the Director finds that the physician is eligible for participation, and the physician's primary care specialty⁶ is needed in a health resource shortage area.

Health resource shortage areas

Current law

(R.C. 3702.76; O.A.C. 3701-6-04)

Under current law, the Director of Health must designate certain areas in the state as "health resource shortage areas." These are areas in Ohio that experience special health problems and physician practice patterns that limit access to medical care. The Director must make the designations by rule, which may apply to a geographic area, one or more facilities within a particular area, or a population group within a particular area. The Director must consider for designation as a health resource shortage area any area in Ohio that has been designated by the United States Secretary of Health and Human Services as a "health manpower shortage area" under Title III of the federal "Public Health Service Act." (See **COMMENT**, below.)

³ "Primary care services" means professional comprehensive personal health services, which may include health education and disease prevention, treatment of uncomplicated health problems, diagnosis of chronic health problems, and overall management of health care services for an individual or a family. "Primary health care services" also includes providing the initial contact for health care services and making referrals for secondary and tertiary care and for continuity of health care services. (R.C. 3702.71(B).)

⁴ Ohio Department of Health, *Physician Loan Repayment – Ohio* (visited Mar. 2, 2004) <<http://www.odh.state.oh.us/ODHPrograms/PHYLOAN/ploan1.htm>>

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ "Primary care specialty" means general internal medicine, pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology, or family practice. (R.C. 3702.71(C).)

The Director of Health has designated the following areas as health resource shortage areas:

- A geographical area, facility, or population group in Ohio that has been designated by the United States Secretary of Health and Human Services as a health manpower shortage area under Title III of the "Public Health Services Act."
- A geographical area, facility, or population group in Ohio that meets both of the following criteria:
 - Has a population to primary care physician ratio exceeding two thousand to one.
 - Has previously been designated to be a health manpower shortage area by the United States Secretary of Health and Human Services, but the Director of Health has determined no longer meets the criteria to be a health manpower shortage area.

The bill

(R.C. 3702.76)

The bill requires the Director of Health to designate all state correctional institutions operated by the Department of Rehabilitation and Correction as health resource shortage areas. All other designations of health resource shortage areas are to be made by rule in accordance with the requirements of current law, described above.

The designation of state correctional institutions as health resource shortage areas means that the Director of Health, Ohio Board of Regents, a primary care physician, and a lender could enter into a contract specifying that the physician participating in the Physician Loan Repayment Program agrees to practice in a state correctional institution operated by the Department of Rehabilitation and Correction.

COMMENT

Title III of the federal "Public Health Service Act" now classifies a "health manpower shortage area" as a "health professional shortage area." The Act defines this term as "(A) [A]n area in an urban or rural area which the Secretary determines has a health manpower shortage and which is not reasonably accessible to an adequately served area, (B) a population group which the Secretary determines has such a shortage, or (C) a public or nonprofit private medical

facility or other public facility which the Secretary determines has such a shortage."

HISTORY

| ACTION | DATE | JOURNAL ENTRY |
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