

CHAPTER 228

RURAL HEALTH CARE ACT OF 1993

Original Senate File No. 21

AN ACT to create W.S. 9-2-116 through 9-2-119; and to repeal W.S. 21-17-112 relating to health; creating an office of rural health care within the department of health; establishing loan repayment programs to pay specified physicians and other health care providers for practicing in designated communities of the state; repealing the office of rural health; and providing for an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Wyoming:

Section 1. W.S. 9-2-116 through 9-2-119 are created to read:

9-2-116. Legislative findings; purposes. The legislature finds that a shortage of primary care physicians and allied health providers exists in the state of Wyoming which limits the availability of adequate health care services for the citizens of the state who live in rural areas. The legislature further finds that the number of qualified physicians and allied health care providers can be increased to enhance the provision of rural health care services by the adoption of incentives to attract more primary care physicians and allied health care providers to communities experiencing these shortages. The legislature therefore enacts the Rural Health Care Act of 1993 to create an office of rural health care and to create a loan

repayment program to repay education loans of primary care physicians and allied health care providers who practice for specified periods of time in designated communities which are experiencing shortages.

9-2-117. Office of rural health care created; duties.

(a) The office of rural health care is created within the department of health. The office shall:

(i) Serve as a clearinghouse for information on primary health care services in communities and rural areas of Wyoming and provide for dissemination of information by appropriate means to interested citizens of the state;

(ii) Provide technical assistance and consultation services to communities and rural areas and thereby assist citizens' groups, local officials and health professionals to:

(A) Recruit and retain health care professionals and support personnel as required;

(B) Assess health care needs and priorities of families living in rural areas;

(C) Identify sources of funding and programming, including information on rural health care districts and the best beginnings program in Albany county;

(D) Establish strong working relationships with health care professionals throughout the state; and

(E) Encourage the development of risk management programs.

(iii) Contract, if necessary, with a private entity to conduct an active and ongoing recruitment program for physicians and other health care professionals and to engage in the following activities:

(A) Assist communities in their effort to recruit and retain physicians and other health care professionals;

(B) Assist communities in the contact and evaluation of potential candidates;

(C) Conduct community studies to ascertain viable support for health care professionals;

(D) Assist physicians and other health care professionals and their families to find communities that will meet their needs and expectations;

(E) Maintain close liaison with government and private sources of health care providers.

(iv) Develop a consortium of state agencies, private health organizations, professional and community organizations in a continuing effort to improve needed rural, primary care and other health care services for the people of Wyoming; and

(v) Administer the loan repayment programs created by W.S. 9-2-118 and 9-2-119.

9-2-118. Physician loan repayment program.

(a) The department is authorized to enter into agreements with primary care physicians graduating from accredited residency programs to provide health care in this state. For purposes of this section "primary care physicians" means general practitioners and physicians recognized as specialists in family practice, internal medicine, pediatric, obstetric or gynecologic care. The agreements shall:

(i) Provide for the physician to practice medicine in a community of the state from among a list of communities developed by the department;

(ii) Provide that the physician shall be repaid up to one hundred percent (100%) of the amount of outstanding educational loans the physician has acquired after completing undergraduate programs and as a direct result of medical school training, not to exceed thirty thousand dollars (\$30,000.00) per year in exchange for practicing his profession under the terms of this section;

(iii) Require the physician to agree to practice for a minimum of three (3) years under the agreement;

(iv) Prohibit the physician from discriminating against any patient whose cost of care is reimbursed under Title XVIII of the federal Social Security Act or the Wyoming Medical Assistance and Services Act;

(v) Contain other provisions the department deems necessary or appropriate to accomplish the purposes of this section.

(b) The department, in consultation with the departmental advisory council, shall promulgate rules necessary to carry out the purposes of this section. In carrying out this section the department shall assess health care needs of the state by geographic areas and practice specialties and shall prioritize and enter into agreements under this section accordingly.

(c) The department may vary the terms of each agreement in accordance with this section based upon the community and the number of patients whose cost of care is reimbursed under Title XVIII of the federal Social Security Act or the Wyoming Medical Assistance and Services Act, served by the physician.

(d) No state money shall be expended for repayment of any loan under this section unless the money is equally matched with other funds in any combination from any county, city, school district or hospital.

9-2-119. Allied health care provider loan repayment program.

(a) The department is authorized to enter into agreements with health care providers licensed or legally authorized to provide health care services in this state including, but not limited to, hospital, medical, surgical, dental, vision, nursing and pharmaceutical services. The agreements shall:

(i) Require the health care provider to provide health care services in a community of the state from among a list of communities developed by the department;

(ii) Provide that the health care provider shall be repaid up to one hundred percent (100%) of the amount of outstanding educational loans the provider has acquired as a result of educational training directly related to providing medical services, not to exceed ten thousand dollars (\$10,000.00) per year in exchange for practicing under the terms of this section;

(iii) Require the health care provider to agree to provide health care services for a minimum of three (3) years under the agreement;

(iv) Prohibit any health care provider from discriminating against any patient whose cost of care is reimbursed under Title XVIII of the federal Social Security Act or the Wyoming Medical Assistance and Services Act;

(v) Contain other provisions the department deems necessary or appropriate to accomplish the purposes of this section.

(b) The department, in consultation with the departmental advisory council, shall promulgate rules necessary to carry out the purposes of this section. In carrying out this section the department shall assess health care needs of the state by geographic areas and particular health care services required and shall prioritize and enter into agreements under this section accordingly.

(c) The department may vary the terms of each agreement in accordance with this section based upon the community and the number of patients whose cost of care is reimbursed under Title XVIII of the federal Social Security Act or the Wyoming Medical Assistance and Services Act, served by the health care provider.

(d) No state money shall be expended for repayment of any loan under this section unless the money is equally matched with other funds in any combination from any county, city, school district or hospital. The other funds may be used by the department to match the federal funds in the absence of or in addition to state funds.

Section 2. W.S. 21-17-112 is repealed.

Section 3. This act is effective July 1, 1993.

Became law without governor's signature March 19, 1993.