

Assembly Bill No. 589

CHAPTER 339

An act to add Article 6 (commencing with Section 128560) to Chapter 5 of Part 3 of Division 107 of the Health and Safety Code, relating to health professions.

[Approved by Governor September 17, 2012. Filed with
Secretary of State September 17, 2012.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 589, Perea. Medical school scholarships.

Existing law establishes the Medically Underserved Account for Physicians within the Health Professions Education Fund that is managed by the Health Professions Education Foundation and the Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development. Under existing law, the primary purpose of the account is to fund the Steven M. Thompson Physician Corps Loan Repayment Program, which provides for the repayment of prescribed educational loans, not to exceed \$105,000 per individual, obtained by a physician and surgeon who practices in a medically underserved area of the state.

This bill would establish within the Health Professions Education Foundation the Steven M. Thompson Medical School Scholarship Program (STMSSP), managed by the foundation and the Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development to promote the education of medical doctors and doctors of osteopathy, as specified. This bill would provide up to \$105,000 per recipient in scholarships to selected participants who agree in writing prior to completing an accredited medical or osteopathic school based in the United States to serve in an eligible setting.

This bill would establish the Steven M. Thompson Medical School Scholarship Account within the Health Professions Education Fund, which would consist of private moneys donated to the STMSSP. This bill would provide that no General Fund moneys shall be used to implement these provisions and that the STMSSP be implemented only to the extent that the account contains sufficient funds as determined by the foundation.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. Article 6 (commencing with Section 128560) is added to Chapter 5 of Part 3 of Division 107 of the Health and Safety Code, to read:

Article 6. Steven M. Thompson Medical School Scholarship Program

128560. (a) There is hereby established within the Health Professions Education Foundation, the Steven M. Thompson Medical School Scholarship Program.

(b) It is the intent of this article that the foundation and the office provide the ongoing program management for the program.

128565. For purposes of this article, the following definitions shall apply:

(a) “Account” means the Steven M. Thompson Medical School Scholarship Account established within the Health Professions Education Fund pursuant to this article.

(b) “Foundation” means the Health Professions Education Foundation.

(c) “Medi-Cal threshold languages” means primary languages spoken by limited-English-proficient (LEP) population groups meeting a numeric threshold of 3,000 LEP individuals eligible for Medi-Cal residing in a county, 1,000 LEP individuals eligible for Medi-Cal residing in a single ZIP Code, or 1,500 LEP individuals eligible for Medi-Cal residing in two contiguous ZIP Codes.

(d) “Medically underserved area” means an area defined as a health professional shortage area in Part 5 (commencing with Sec. 5.1) of Subchapter A of Chapter 1 of Title 42 of the Code of Federal Regulations or an area of the state where unmet priority needs for physicians exist as determined by the California Healthcare Workforce Policy Commission pursuant to Section 128225.

(e) “Medically underserved population” means the persons served by the Medi-Cal program, the Healthy Families Program, and uninsured populations.

(f) “Office” means the Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development (OSHPD).

(g) “Practice setting” means either of the following:

(1) A community clinic as defined in subdivision (a) of Section 1204 and subdivision (c) of Section 1206, a clinic owned or operated by a public hospital and health system, or a clinic owned and operated by a hospital that maintains the primary contract with a county government to fulfill the county’s role pursuant to Section 17000 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, each of which is located in a medically underserved area and at least 50 percent of whose patients are from a medically underserved population.

(2) A medical practice located in a medically underserved area and at least 50 percent of whose patients are from a medically underserved population.

(h) “Primary specialty” means family practice, internal medicine, pediatrics, or obstetrics/gynecology.

(i) “Program” means the Steven M. Thompson Medical School Scholarship Program.

(j) “Selection committee” means the advisory committee of not more than seven members established pursuant to subdivision (b) of Section 128551.

(k) “Super-medically underserved area” means an area defined as medically underserved pursuant to subdivision (d) that also meets a heightened criteria of physician shortage as determined by the foundation.

128570. (a) Persons participating in the program shall be persons who agree in writing prior to completing an accredited medical or osteopathic school based in the United States to serve in an eligible practice setting, pursuant to subdivision (g) of Section 128565, for at least three years. The program shall be used only for the purpose of promoting the education of medical doctors and doctors of osteopathy and related administrative costs.

(b) A program participant shall commit to three years of full-time professional practice once the participant has achieved full licensure pursuant to Article 4 (commencing with Section 2080) of Chapter 5 or Section 2099.5 of the Business and Professions Code and after completing an accredited residency program. The obligated professional service shall be in direct patient care in an eligible practice setting pursuant to subdivision (g) of Section 128565.

(1) Leaves of absence either during medical school or service obligation shall be permitted for serious illness, pregnancy, or other natural causes. The selection committee shall develop the process for determining the maximum permissible length of an absence, the maximum permissible leaves of absences, and the process for reinstatement. Awarding of scholarship funds shall be deferred until the participant is back to full-time status.

(2) Full-time status shall be defined by the selection committee. The selection committee may establish exemptions from this requirement on a case-by-case basis.

(c) The maximum allowable amount per total scholarship shall be one hundred five thousand dollars (\$105,000). These moneys shall be distributed over the course of a standard medical school curriculum. The distribution of funds shall increase over the course of medical school, increasing to ensure that at least 45 percent of the total scholarship award is distributed upon matriculation in the final year of school.

(d) In the event the program participant does not complete medical school and the minimum three years of professional service pursuant to the contractual agreement between the foundation and the participant, the office shall recover the funds awarded plus the maximum allowable interest for failure to begin or complete the service obligation.

128575. (a) The selection committee shall use guidelines developed by the office that meet all of the following criteria to select scholarship recipients:

(1) Provide priority consideration to applicants who are best suited to meet the cultural and linguistic needs and demands of patients from medically underserved populations and who meet one or more of the following criteria:

(A) Speak a Medi-Cal threshold language.

(B) Come from an economically disadvantaged background.

(C) Have experience working in medically underserved areas or with medically underserved populations.

(2) Give preference to applicants who have committed to practicing in a primary specialty.

(3) Give preference to applicants who will serve in a practice setting in a super-medically underserved area.

(4) Include a factor ensuring geographic distribution of placements.

(b) The selection committee may award up to 20 percent of the available scholarships to program applicants who will practice specialties outside of a primary specialty.

(c) The foundation, in consultation with the selection committee, shall develop a process for outreach to potentially eligible applicants.

(d) The office shall develop the guidelines described in subdivision (a) only upon receipt of donations sufficient to cover the costs of developing the guidelines.

128580. (a) The Steven M. Thompson Medical School Scholarship Account is hereby established within the Health Professions Education Fund. The account shall consist of private moneys donated to the program for deposit into the fund and any interest that accrues on those moneys.

(b) Funds in the account shall be used to fund scholarships pursuant to agreements made with recipients and as follows:

(1) Scholarships shall not exceed one hundred five thousand dollars (\$105,000) per recipient.

(2) Scholarships shall not exceed the amount of the educational expenses incurred by the recipient.

(c) Funds placed in the account for purposes of this article shall, upon appropriation by the Legislature, be used for the purposes of this article. Funds supporting the Steven M. Thompson Physician Corps Loan Repayment Program established pursuant to Article 5 (commencing with Section 128550) shall not be used for the purposes of this article.

(d) The account shall be used to pay for the cost of administering the program and for any other purpose authorized by this article. The cost of administering the program, including promoting the education of medical doctors and doctors of osteopathy in an accredited school who agree to service in an eligible setting and related administrative costs, shall not exceed 10 percent of the total appropriation for the program.

(e) The office and the foundation shall manage the account established by this section prudently in accordance with other provisions of law.

(f) This article shall be implemented only to the extent that the account contains sufficient funds as determined by the foundation.

128585. No General Fund moneys shall be used to implement this article.