

FINAL BILL REPORT

HB 2007

C 276 L 22

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Establishing a nurse educator loan repayment program under the Washington health corps.

Sponsors: Representatives Slatter, Cody, Bergquist, Goodman, Leavitt, Peterson, Ramel, Ryu, Santos, Senn, Tharinger, Chopp, Macri, Bateman, Ormsby, Riccelli, Lekanoff and Pollet.

House Committee on College & Workforce Development

Senate Committee on Higher Education & Workforce Development

Senate Committee on Ways & Means

Background:

Washington Health Corps.

The Washington Health Corps was established in 2019 to encourage health care professionals to work in shortage areas by providing loan repayment. The Washington Health Corps is an umbrella program under which two loan repayment programs were placed: the Health Professional Loan Repayment and Conditional Scholarship Program and the Behavioral Health Loan Repayment program. The programs provide licensed professionals with repayment on all or a portion of participants' outstanding student loans in exchange for service at an eligible site. Eligible sites are health care facilities that provide comprehensive outpatient, ambulatory, and primary health care services.

Both programs are administered by the Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC), in collaboration with the Department of Health, under the same structure and application process. Both programs provide a maximum loan repayment award of \$75,000 for a minimum three-year service obligation. The maximum loan repayment award is based on full-time employment, but if the participant works less than a full-time work schedule, the employment is the prorated equivalent for up to five years. A participant is required to work at least a 24-hour work week and is allowed 40 days per year in leave. The programs differ in who is eligible and what the eligible shortage areas are.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

If a participant defaults on the terms of their service obligation, a penalty is assessed. The penalty for both programs is an amount equal to the unsatisfied portion of the service obligation or the total amount paid on the participant's behalf, whichever is less, plus interest, in addition to costs associated with debt collection.

Nurse Educators.

A nurse educator is a registered nurse who holds an advanced degree and serves as a faculty member in a nursing school or teaching hospital. Nurse educators are responsible for developing, implementing, evaluating, updating, and teaching nursing education curriculum. An advanced degree includes, but is not limited to, a Master of Nursing, Doctor of Nursing Practice, and a Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing.

The Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission.

The Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission (Commission) is a 15 member, governor appointed board responsible for the regulation of advanced registered nurse practitioners, licensed practical nurses, registered nurses, and certified nursing technicians. The Commission establishes, monitors, and enforces licensing, standards of practice, continuing competency mechanisms, and discipline.

Summary:

The Nurse Educator Loan Repayment Program (NELR Program) is established under the umbrella of the Washington Health Corps. Nurse educators who teach for an approved nursing program are eligible for the NELR Program. "Nurse educator" is defined as an individual with an advanced nursing degree beyond a bachelor's degree that teaches nursing curriculum and is a faculty member for an approved nursing program. "Approved nursing program" is defined to mean a nursing educational program that leads to a degree or licensure in nursing that is approved by the Commission and is located at an institution of higher education that is authorized to participate in state financial aid programs. The WSAC, in consultation with the Department of Health, must determine selection criteria for nurse educators and for approved nursing programs.

The NELR Program is administered by the WSAC using the same administrative structure and responsibilities as the other Washington Health Corps programs, such as establishing annual award amounts, establishing the required service obligation, and collecting payments from participants who fail to complete their service obligation.

Votes on Final Passage:

House	97	1
Senate	47	0

Effective: