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**SENATE BILL 5909**

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**State of Washington                      64th Legislature                      2015 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Frockt, Becker, Pedersen, Habib, and Keiser

Read first time 02/09/15. Referred to Committee on Health Care.

1            AN ACT Relating to increasing the health care workforce and  
2 increasing health care access across Washington state through  
3 expansion of undergraduate medical and dental education, graduate  
4 medical education, and health professional scholarship and loan  
5 repayment programming; adding new sections to chapter 28B.20 RCW;  
6 adding new sections to chapter 70.112 RCW; adding a new section to  
7 chapter 28B.115 RCW; creating new sections; and making  
8 appropriations.

9 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

10            NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 1.** This act may be known and cited as the  
11 omnibus health care access act of 2015.

12            NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 2.** (1) The legislature finds that there is an  
13 increasing shortage of practicing health care practitioners serving  
14 patients in the state of Washington. In particular, Washington state  
15 has a growing shortage of family medicine primary care physicians,  
16 especially in rural and underserved areas. Workforce projections show  
17 that Washington state needs eight hundred seventy-six more primary  
18 care physicians in the state by as early as 2020 in order to meet the  
19 needs of patients in Washington state.

1 (2) The legislature further finds that adequately addressing the  
2 shortage of primary care health care practitioners, especially in  
3 rural and underserved areas, requires a comprehensive health policy  
4 approach that makes efficient use of public resources with an  
5 emphasis on evidence-based practices.

6 (3) Accordingly, the legislature finds the University of  
7 Washington school of medicine, serving as the medical school for a  
8 five-state region of Washington, Wyoming, Alaska, Montana, and Idaho  
9 currently operates the number one ranked primary care, family  
10 medicine, and rural medicine school in the nation at approximately  
11 one-third less cost than the national average. Due in large part to  
12 its community-based education model, the percentage of medical  
13 student graduates of the University of Washington that stay in their  
14 home state and practice primary care also exceeds national averages.  
15 Therefore, greater student access to the University of Washington  
16 school of medicine is a critical component to expanding Washington's  
17 physician workforce.

18 (4) In addition, studies show that the greatest predictor of  
19 where a physician will stay and practice is where they do their  
20 residency, or post medical school training. Studies also show that,  
21 by 2017, the number of students graduating from medical school will  
22 exceed the number of residency slots available in the United States.  
23 In order to ensure additional medical school graduates stay and  
24 practice in rural and underserved communities in Washington state,  
25 the legislature finds that it is critical to increase the number of  
26 family medicine residency slots in underserved areas.

27 (5) The legislature also finds that the University of Washington,  
28 school of dentistry's regional initiatives in dental education  
29 program, operated in partnership with Eastern Washington University,  
30 has been recognized as a model for addressing oral health workforce  
31 needs in rural and underserved communities. The program's regional,  
32 community-based approach has resulted in ninety percent of regional  
33 initiatives in dental education graduates practicing in rural and  
34 underserved areas in Washington state. Therefore, greater student  
35 access to the University of Washington school of dentistry is a  
36 critical component to expanding Washington's oral health workforce.

37 (6) Finally, the legislature finds that many underserved  
38 communities face financial barriers, including those related to  
39 providers' health education loan debt and disparate salaries and  
40 struggle to attract and retain well-trained health professionals.

1 Health professional shortage areas also face additional health care  
2 delivery challenges, including patient income or transportation  
3 barriers and lower provider service reimbursements.

4 (7) The health professional loan repayment and scholarship  
5 program fund assists underserved communities in recruiting and  
6 retaining qualified health professionals. The incentive program also  
7 encourages interested and academically prepared health care students  
8 and professionals to consider practice in shortage areas. The  
9 legislature finds that interested students who are encouraged to  
10 explore the benefits and unique professional challenges presented in  
11 rural health practice are more likely to establish community roots  
12 and remain in the area in which they are trained. Providing  
13 underserved communities additional resources to recruit qualified  
14 health professionals reinforces the state's commitment to improve  
15 access to comprehensive health care for all persons in Washington.

16 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 28B.20  
17 RCW to read as follows:

18 (1) Subject to legislative authorization of the ability to offer  
19 medical education or establish a separately accredited medical school  
20 at Washington State University, all state operating funds and capital  
21 space facilities provided to Washington State University as of June  
22 30, 2015, for the operations of the five-state regional medical  
23 education program provided by the University of Washington school of  
24 medicine in Spokane must be transferred to the University of  
25 Washington by July 1, 2015, for current and ongoing operations and  
26 student support services of the five-state regional medical education  
27 program provided by the University of Washington school of medicine.

28 (2) Subject to transfer of the resources outlined above, the  
29 University of Washington shall maintain a medical student class size  
30 of at least forty students per year in Spokane. All medical students  
31 must be Washington state residents as defined by RCW 28B.15.012.

32 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** A new section is added to chapter 28B.20  
33 RCW to read as follows:

34 (1) Subject to available funding, the University of Washington is  
35 directed to increase the number of medical students at its medical  
36 school in Spokane from forty students per year to one hundred twenty  
37 students per year as quickly as practicable, but no later than the  
38 2021-22 academic year. All medical students accepted by the

1 University of Washington for this expansion must be Washington state  
2 residents as defined by RCW 28B.15.012.

3 (2) Classroom and lab space must be provided on the Riverpoint  
4 campus to the University of Washington to accommodate the class size  
5 expansion outlined in subsection (1) of this section.

6 (3) Subject to available funding, the University of Washington is  
7 directed to increase the number of dental students at its dental  
8 program in Spokane from eight students per year to thirty students  
9 per year as quickly as practicable, but no later than the 2019-20  
10 academic year. All dental students accepted by the University of  
11 Washington for this expansion must be Washington state residents as  
12 defined by RCW 28B.15.012.

13 (4) Classroom and lab space must be provided on the Riverpoint  
14 campus to the University of Washington to accommodate the class size  
15 expansion outlined in subsection (3) of this section.

16 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** A new section is added to chapter 70.112  
17 RCW to read as follows:

18 Subject to available state funding, the medical education system  
19 is directed to allocate funds to new or expanded residency programs.  
20 The medical education system shall prioritize funding for the  
21 following programs:

22 (1) New and expanded residency programs in rural and underserved  
23 areas in the state;

24 (2) Conversion of existing osteopathic residency programs to new  
25 accreditation standards;

26 (3) New and expanded residency programs that leverage additional  
27 nonstate funding or maximize federal matching opportunities.

28 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** A new section is added to chapter 70.112  
29 RCW to read as follows:

30 (1) There is created a family practice education advisory board  
31 which consists of nine members with the dean of the school of  
32 medicine serving as chair. Other members of the board are:

33 (a) Chair, department of family medicine, school of medicine;

34 (b) Two public members to be appointed by the governor;

35 (c) A member appointed by the Washington state medical  
36 association;

37 (d) A member appointed by the Washington state academy of family  
38 physicians;

1 (e) A hospital administrator representing those Washington  
2 hospitals with family practice residency programs, appointed by the  
3 governor;

4 (f) A director representing the directors of community based  
5 family practice residency programs, appointed by the governor; and

6 (g) A member that is an osteopath licensed under chapter 18.57  
7 RCW.

8 (2)(a) The dean and chair of the department of family medicine at  
9 the University of Washington school of medicine are permanent members  
10 of the advisory board.

11 (b) Other members must be initially appointed as follows: Terms  
12 of the two public members are two years; the member from the medical  
13 association and the hospital administrator, three years; and the  
14 remaining two members, four years. Thereafter, terms for the  
15 nonpermanent members are four years. Members may serve two  
16 consecutive terms and new appointments must be filled in the same  
17 manner as for original appointments. Vacancies must be filled for an  
18 unexpired term in the manner of the original appointment.

19 (c) The position of chair must rotate each year. The chair is  
20 selected by a majority vote of the board.

21 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 7.** A new section is added to chapter 70.112  
22 RCW to read as follows:

23 The advisory board under section 6 of this act shall advise the  
24 dean and the chair of the department of family medicine in the  
25 implementation of the educational programs provided for in this  
26 chapter including, but not limited to, the selection of the areas  
27 within the state where affiliate residency programs should exist, the  
28 allocation of funds appropriated under this chapter, and the  
29 procedures for review and evaluation of the residency programs.

30 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 8.** A new section is added to chapter 28B.115  
31 RCW to read as follows:

32 (1) The sum of four million dollars, or as much thereof as may be  
33 necessary, is appropriated from the general fund for the fiscal year  
34 ending June 30, 2016, for the purposes of restoring funding to the  
35 health professional loan repayment and scholarship program fund.

36 (2) The sum of four million dollars, or as much thereof as may be  
37 necessary, is appropriated from the general fund for the fiscal year

1 ending June 30, 2017, for the purposes of restoring funding to the  
2 health professional loan repayment and scholarship program fund.

3 (3) The amounts appropriated in this section must be deposited  
4 into the health professional loan repayment and scholarship program  
5 fund.

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