

HB602 INTRODUCED



1 HB602
2 FKRVACD-1
3 By Representatives Warren, Daniels, Clarke, Lands, Jones,
4 Drummond, Jackson, McClammy, Rafferty, Morris, Hendrix,
5 Travis, Datcher, Sellers, McCampbell, Moore (M), Bracy,
6 Tillman, Lawrence, Chestnut, Hassell, Hall, Ensler, Hollis,
7 Gray
8 RFD: Ways and Means General Fund
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SYNOPSIS:

This bill would create the Rural Allied Health Professional Workforce Expansion Act to address shortages in allied health professions across rural communities by expanding training capacity, funding tuition support, and incentivizing rural placements through structured education-to-employment pipelines.

A BILL
TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

Relating to the Alabama Department of Public Health; to provide for the creation of a program to train allied health professionals; to provide for grants or loan forgiveness for certain students; to create a fund from which monies are dispursed; to provide for reporting; to provide for the creation of training centers; and to provide for an internship stipend.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

Section 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the Rural Allied Health Professional Workforce Expansion Act.

Section 2. It is the intent of this Legislature to



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29 provide opportunities and funding to expand and support the
30 pipeline of allied health professionals serving rural and
31 underserved communities.

32 Section 3. For the purposes of this act, the following
33 terms have the following meanings:

34 (1) ALLIED HEALTH PROFESSIONAL. A health professional,
35 not including a registered nurse or physician assistant, who:

36 a. has received a certificate, an associate's degree, a
37 bachelor's degree, a master's degree, a doctoral degree, or
38 postbaccalaureate training, in a science relating to health
39 care;

40 b. shares in the responsibility for the delivery of
41 health care services or related services, including:

42 1. services relating to the identification, evaluation,
43 and prevention of disease and disorders;

44 2. dietary and nutrition services;

45 3. health promotion services;

46 4. rehabilitation services; or

47 5. health systems management services; and

48 c. has not received a degree of doctor of medicine, a
49 degree of doctor of osteopathy, a degree of doctor of
50 dentistry or an equivalent degree, a degree of doctor of
51 veterinary medicine or an equivalent degree, a degree of
52 doctor of optometry or an equivalent degree, a degree of
53 doctor of podiatric medicine or an equivalent degree, a degree
54 of bachelor of science in pharmacy or an equivalent degree, a
55 degree of doctor of pharmacy or an equivalent degree, a
56 graduate degree in public health or an equivalent degree, a



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57 degree of doctor of chiropractic or an equivalent degree, a
58 graduate degree in health administration or an equivalent
59 degree, a doctoral degree in clinical psychology or an
60 equivalent degree, a degree in social work or an equivalent
61 degree, or a degree in counseling or an equivalent degree.

62 (2) DEPARTMENT. The Alabama Department of Public
63 Health.

64 (3) ELIGIBLE TRAINING PROGRAMS. Programs taught at a
65 public or nonprofit private, two-year or four-year institution
66 of higher education that provides programs of education to
67 individuals to become allied health professionals.

68 (4) MEDICALLY UNDERSERVED COMMUNITY. An urban or rural
69 area or population that is eligible for designation under 42
70 USC §254(e) as a health professional shortage area, or is
71 designated by the Governor or the department as a shortage
72 area.

73 Section 4. (a) The Department shall administer a
74 program to provide either of the following:

75 (1) Tuition grants for students enrolled in eligible
76 training programs.

77 (2) Loan forgiveness for licensed graduates who commit
78 to at least two years of practice in a medically underserved
79 area.

80 (b) Priority shall be given to applicants with rural
81 backgrounds or demonstrated interest in rural service.

82 Section 5. (a) Rural Clinical Training Partnership Fund
83 is established in the State Treasury and shall be maintained
84 by the department.



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85 (b) Monies collected pursuant to this act shall be
86 deposited to the State Treasury to the credit of the Rural
87 Clinical Training Partnership Fund of the department. Amounts
88 deposited into the fund shall be budgeted and allotted in
89 accordance with Sections 41-4-80 through 41-4-96 and Sections
90 41-19-1 through 41-19-12, Code of Alabama 1975.

91 (c) Monies in the fund, at the discretion of the
92 department, shall be used exclusively for financial assistance
93 for grants to accredited health profession programs that:

94 (1) Establish or expand clinical rotation agreements
95 with rural providers;

96 (2) Recruit and train rural preceptors; and

97 (3) Deliver interprofessional training modules tailored
98 to rural health.

99 (d) Funds may support faculty stipends, travel costs,
100 and clinical coordination.

101 (e) The department, before the 15th legislative day of
102 each regular session of the Legislature, shall submit a report
103 to the Legislature detailing the disbursements and uses of
104 monies from the fund in the previous calendar year.

105 Section 6. (a) The department, in consultation with the
106 Alabama Department of Workforce, shall fund the creation or
107 expansion of satellite training centers or mobile simulation
108 units to reach rural learners, which may include purchasing
109 equipment, hiring instructional staff, and curriculum
110 development.

111 Section 7. (a) The department shall create the Paid
112 Rural Health Internships Program, which will provide stipends



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113 of up to five thousand (\$5,000) per student for internships or
114 externships conducted in rural clinical settings.

115 (b) Host facilities must provide structured mentorship
116 and meaningful hands-on experience.

117 Section 8. (a) The department, in consultation and
118 coordination with the Alabama Department of Workforce, shall
119 conduct annual data collection and publish a report on:

120 (1) Enrollment and graduation rates in rural-serving
121 programs;

122 (2) Clinical placement availability by region; and

123 (3) Workforce shortages and projected demand.

124 (b) The report shall inform future program planning and
125 investment.

126 Section 9. This act shall become effective on October
127 1, 2026.