



ISSUE BRIEF

ENACT LEGISLATION TO ALLOW DOCTORS OF CHIROPRACTIC TO PARTICIPATE IN THE NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE CORPS

BACKGROUND:

The National Health Service Corps is comprised of a range of different types of health care professionals that help provide badly needed health care service in a variety of geographic areas across the nation known as “HPSAs” (Health Professional Shortage Areas) a designation that is determined in conformance with Section 332 of the Public Health Service Act. In addition to designated geographic areas, a number of individual facilities are also designated as HPSAs, typically federally qualified community and rural health care centers. To help locate health professionals in those areas where a documented shortage of health professionals has been determined to exist, the National Health Service Corps manages a Loan Repayment Program and a Scholarship Program for which certain types of health care providers are eligible to apply. These programs offer important levels of financial assistance (typically up to \$50,000) to repay student loans and expenses associated with obtaining an eligible health provider’s degree, in return for practicing in a designated HPSA area or site for a two-year period. In some circumstances, these programs are able to provide additional loan repayment funds for service beyond the initial two-year period.

Types of health care providers that qualify for these programs include: Allopathic and Osteopathic Physicians; Nurse Practitioners; Certified Nurse Midwives; Physician Assistants; Dentists; Registered Dental Hygienists; Health Service Psychologists; Licensed Clinical Social Workers; Licensed Professional Counselors; Marriage and Family Therapists and Psychiatric Nurse Specialists.

THE ISSUE:

Doctors of Chiropractic (DCs) are primary care portal-of-entry providers licensed in all 50 states to treat a wide-range of health care conditions, including wide-spread spinal maladies, but are not specifically designated as eligible to participate in the NHSC programs. The population of patients living in HPSA designated areas or receive care through HPSA designated sites are every bit in need of the important non-surgical, non-pharmaceutical services provided by Doctors of Chiropractic, as are those patients living in non-HPSA areas and would benefit from access to Doctor of Chiropractic health care providers.

(over)

ACTION NEEDED:

- Representative Gregg Harper (R-Mississippi) has introduced **H.R. 1378, bi-partisan legislation that would amend the Public Health Service Act to designate that Doctors of Chiropractic are eligible to compete in the NHSC Loan Repayment and Scholarship Program.** H.R. 1378 has been referred to the Energy & Commerce Committee.
- **H.R. 1378 is “budget neutral,” and as such, adds no new costs to the federal budget** – as it would allow Doctors of Chiropractic to be eligible to compete for a share of those overall funds available within the ongoing Loan Repayment and Scholarship program.
- **Members of the House of Representatives are requested to contact Rep. Harper’s office and co-sponsor this legislation and work for its enactment.**

For Additional Information Please Contact:

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