

2021 -- H 5540

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2021

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A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION - THE MEDICAL PROFESSIONAL SCHOLARSHIP  
PROGRAM

Introduced By: Representatives Tobon, Baginski, Alzate, Edwards, Barros, Amore, and  
Craven

Date Introduced: February 12, 2021

Referred To: House Finance

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Title 16 of the General Laws entitled "EDUCATION" is hereby amended by  
2 adding thereto the following chapter:

3 CHAPTER 70.1

4 THE MEDICAL PROFESSIONAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

5 **16-70.1-1. Short title.**

6 This chapter shall be known and may be cited as the "Medical Professional Scholarship  
7 Program."

8 **16-70.1-2. Program for the support of the medical professional scholarship**  
9 **established.**

10 The council on postsecondary education in consultation with the director of the department  
11 of health, or designee, is empowered to establish and provide as part of the operation of the office  
12 of the postsecondary commissioner methods and procedures for the state's support of the medical  
13 professional scholarship program fund and provide financial and technical assistance as needed.

14 **16-70.1-3. Powers.**

15 The council on postsecondary education in consultation with the director of the department  
16 of health or the director's designee is authorized and empowered:

17 (1) To adopt rules and regulations designed to implement the provisions of this chapter;

18 (2) To adopt selection criteria, consistent with this chapter;

1 (3) To select annually the best and brightest scholars seeking to work in the medical field;

2 (4) To provide, through the office of the postsecondary commissioner, the authority to  
3 designate the medical professional scholarship program, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization  
4 registered with the Rhode Island secretary of state, as the entity that will administer and operate all  
5 program services and manage scholarship resources;

6 (5) To supervise the disbursement of the scholarship fund;

7 (6) To work in cooperation with the Rhode Island higher education assistance authority  
8 which is directed to provide the committee with staff assistance necessary to carry out the purposes  
9 of this chapter; and

10 (7) To receive donations and grants from sources including, but not limited to, the federal  
11 government, governmental and private foundations, and corporate and individual donors; with  
12 these donations and grants to be deposited in the scholarship fund.

13 **16-70.1-4. Eligibility for scholarship.**

14 To be considered for the scholarship, all applicants must:

15 (1) Be a graduating senior at a public, parochial, or private high school in Rhode Island;

16 (2) Be accepted for admission at an accredited college or university in the United States or  
17 Canada;

18 (3) Achieve one or more of the following distinctions:

19 (i) Be in the top ten percent (10%) of the applicant's graduating class as of the end of the  
20 second quarter of the senior year;

21 (ii) Have a score in the ninetieth percentile or above on either the mathematics or verbal  
22 section of the scholastic aptitude test (S.A.T.); or

23 (iii) Have a combined mathematics and verbal S.A.T. score in the eighty-fifth percentile or  
24 above; and

25 (4) Have completed twenty (20) hours of community service at an accredited or licensed  
26 community based health center.

27 **16-70.1-5. Award of scholarship - Conditions.**

28 At any time that sufficient funds become available, the commissioner shall award  
29 scholarships in the amount of five thousand dollars (\$5,000) for each of the four (4) years of college  
30 attendance to each of the eligible applicants which the commissioner deems to be most qualified  
31 for the scholarship; provided, that to maintain entitlement to the scholarship each recipient must:

32 (1) Be enrolled as a full-time student in an accredited college or university in the United  
33 States or Canada;

34 (2) Pursue a course of study leading to a degree or certification in the medical field; and

1           (3) Maintain satisfactory progress as determined by the college or university attended by  
2 the recipient.

3           **16-70.1-6. Funding.**

4           (a) The fund shall be financed by the assessment of twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) added to  
5 the fee of all medical professionals upon filing an application for licensure with the state pursuant  
6 to the provisions of title 5.

7           (b) The monies received by the fund shall be deposited in a restricted receipt account  
8 administered by the commissioner of postsecondary education.

9           (c) No scholarship may be awarded until the fund reaches the sum of one hundred thousand  
10 dollars (\$100,000).

11           (d) Upon reaching the sum of one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000), the commissioner  
12 may utilize only fifty percent (50%) of the money in the award of scholarships with the remainder  
13 of the money to be invested in an interest bearing account.

14           **16-70.1-7. Disbursement of scholarship funds.**

15           (a) The state controller is authorized and directed to draw orders upon the general treasurer  
16 for the payment of the funds deposited into the restricted receipt account upon receipt of the proper  
17 voucher provided by the office of the postsecondary commissioner.

18           (b) The office of the postsecondary commissioner shall present the voucher to the state  
19 controller no later than the last day of the first month of the fiscal year for which the scholarship is  
20 awarded and this amount shall be remitted to the account of the council on postsecondary education  
21 by the state treasurer no later than the last day of the second month of that fiscal year.

22           **16-70.1-8. Audit requirements.**

23           The medical professional scholarship program, by and through the office of the  
24 postsecondary commissioner, shall submit an annual audit to be completed by the employment of  
25 private auditors. Audit work papers of the private auditors shall be made available upon request to  
26 the auditor general and/or the director of administration for their review, at the completion of the  
27 audit. The audit report shall be furnished to the auditor general and the director of administration.

28           **16-70.1-9. Severability.**

29           If any provision of this chapter or any rule or regulation made under this chapter, or its  
30 application to any person or circumstance, is held invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, the  
31 remainder of the chapter, rule or regulation and the application of the provision to other persons or  
32 circumstances shall not be affected by its invalidity. The invalidity of any section or sections or  
33 parts of any section or sections of this chapter shall not affect the validity of the remainder of this  
34 chapter.

1 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF

A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION - THE MEDICAL PROFESSIONAL SCHOLARSHIP  
PROGRAM

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1           This act would establish the medical professional scholarship program within the council  
2           on postsecondary education and empower the commissioner of postsecondary education to award  
3           five thousand dollar (\$5,000) scholarships for each of the four (4) years of college attendance to  
4           each eligible applicant selected by the commissioner. The program would be funded by a twenty-  
5           five dollar (\$25.00) assessment on the fee of all medical professionals seeking licensure by the  
6           state.

7           This act would take effect upon passage.

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