

DIGEST

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SB 20 Engrossed

2023 Regular Session

McMath

Present law authorizes the board of commissioners (board) of a hospital or hospital service district to establish and administer a nursing scholarship program for the purpose of increasing the educational opportunities available to nursing students who will practice in the hospital district. Present law further authorizes a separate allied health profession scholarship program for the purpose of increasing the educational opportunities available to allied health students who will practice in the hospital district. Proposed law combines the two programs into one scholarship program for both nursing and allied health students.

Present law defines "allied health" as any generally recognized medical profession or vocation including but not limited to respiratory, vocational, physical, and other therapies; medical, radiologic, and other technologists; pharmacists, social workers, and other similar professions and vocations. Proposed law specifies that allied health includes occupational therapy and athletic trainers.

Present law defines "nursing" as professional nursing as practiced by an individual who has graduated from an accredited school of nursing, passed the licensing examination, and been issued a license to practice as registered nurse in this state by the La. State Board of Nursing. Proposed law adds licensed practical nursing.

Present law provides that a nursing student must be a United States Citizen and resident of Louisiana who is admitted to or engaged in the study of nursing at an accredited school located in Louisiana. Present law further provides that an allied health student must be a United States Citizen and resident of Louisiana who is admitted to or engaged in the study of an allied health profession at an accredited school located in the United States. Proposed law expands eligibility to any nursing or allied health student engaged in the study of nursing or allied health at an accredited school located in the United States.

Present law provides that any applicant selected by the board of commissioners to receive a scholarship shall enter into a contract with the board and requires the contract to be signed by the chairman of the board of commissioners, the vice-chairman of the board, and the applicant. Proposed law requires the contract to be signed by the president and chief executive officer, or equivalent, of the hospital or hospital service district and the applicant.

Present law provides that for each \$1,000 of scholarship monies received from the hospital district, the recipient shall be obligated to practice full time nursing for a period of six months up to a total not to exceed 36 months of full time work as consideration for the scholarship awarded. Proposed law repeals present law.

Present law provides that upon default of payment of the scholarship, the board shall turn the matter over to the attorney general or any parish or district attorney acting for the board for prosecution and suit for the amount due. Proposed law repeals present law and provides that the board shall begin efforts to recoup any amount owed including but not limited to filing suit for the amount due.

Present law provides that venue for filing suit shall be proper in the parish of the domicile of the recipient, the parish in which the school at which the recipient was last enrolled is located, or the parish of East Baton Rouge. Proposed law retains present law but broadens venue from the parish of East Baton Rouge to the parish where the hospital service district is located.

Effective upon signature of governor or lapse of time for gubernatorial action.

(Amends R.S. 46:1131, 1133-1138, 1140, and 1141; repeals R.S. 46:1151-1162)

Summary of Amendments Adopted by Senate

Committee Amendments Proposed by Senate Committee on Health and Welfare to the original bill

1. Specify that the definition of allied health includes occupational therapy.
2. Add licensed practical nursing to the definition of nursing.

Summary of Amendments Adopted by House

The Committee Amendments Proposed by House Committee on Health and Welfare to the engrossed bill:

1. Add athletic trainers to the allied health professional definition.
2. Provide clarity about licensed practical nurse participation in the scholarship program.