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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2024

A N A C T

RELATING TO HEALTH AND SAFETY -- PRIMARY CARE TRAINING SITES PROGRAM

Introduced By: Senators Lauria, Ruggerio, DiMario, Miller, and Lawson

Date Introduced: March 05, 2024

Referred To: Senate Finance

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. The general assembly hereby makes the following findings of fact:

2 (1) Primary care healthcare in the State of Rhode Island is in crisis.

3 (2) There currently exists a national and regional shortage of primary care healthcare
4 providers.

5 (3) Many primary care healthcare providers are retiring early and many more are
6 approaching retirement age.

7 (4) Primary care healthcare is provided by physicians, nurse practitioners and physician
8 assistants and the overall numbers of medical professionals entering the field of primary care
9 healthcare is declining.

10 (5) It is increasingly difficult for primary care practices to hire nurses, medical assistants,
11 behavioral health clinicians and other key staff, which is leading to even higher burnout among
12 primary care providers.

13 (6) Fewer students are going into primary care as a profession due to lower salaries, high
14 student loans and increasing administrative burden leading to provider burnout.

15 (7) Our aging Rhode Island population requires more medical care.

16 (8) As a state, we must recruit, train, retain and sustain the number of primary care
17 providers sufficient to meet the population health needs of all Rhode Islanders.

18 (9) Investments in primary care are essential for access to health services, improving the
19 health of the population and reducing overall healthcare costs.

1 SECTION 2. Title 23 of the General Laws entitled "HEALTH AND SAFETY" is hereby
2 amended by adding thereto the following chapter:

3 CHAPTER 17.29

4 PRIMARY CARE TRAINING SITES PROGRAM

5 **23-17.29-1. Short title.**

6 This chapter shall be known and may be cited as the "Primary Care Training Sites
7 Program".

8 **23-17.29-2. Definitions.**

9 As used in this chapter, the following words and phrases are construed as follows:

10 (1) "Director" means the director of the department of health;

11 (2) "Grant" means a sum awarded pursuant to a contract executed pursuant to § 23-17.29-
12 7(b);

13 (3) "National Committee for Quality Assurance" or "NCQA" means the nonprofit
14 organization headquartered in the District of Columbia working to improve healthcare quality
15 through the administration of evidence-based standards, measures, programs and accreditation;

16 (4) "Office" means the office of primary care training established pursuant to the provisions
17 of § 23-17.29-3;

18 (5) "Patient-centered medical home" or "PCMH" means a model of healthcare that puts
19 patients at the forefront of care by providing team-based healthcare delivery led by a healthcare
20 provider to render comprehensive and continuous medical care to patients with a goal to obtain
21 maximal health outcomes;

22 (6) "Primary care" means day-to-day healthcare provided by a healthcare professional.
23 Typically, the healthcare professional acts as the first contact and principal point of continuing care
24 for patients within a healthcare system, and coordinates other specialist care that the patient may
25 require; and

26 (7) "Primary care site" means a site, location or medical practice that serves as the patient's
27 entry point into the healthcare system and acts as the continuing focal point for all required
28 healthcare services.

29 **23-17.29-3. Creation of office of primary care training.**

30 There is hereby authorized, created and established an office of primary care training
31 within the department of health.

32 **23-17.29-4. Purpose.**

33 The purpose of the office of primary care training shall be to:

34 (1) Assist the director in developing an application and selection process for the awarding

- 1 of grants pursuant to the provisions of this chapter;
- 2 (2) Provide oversight of grant recipients;
- 3 (3) Coordinate meetings and related logistics to implement the provisions of this chapter;
- 4 (4) Assist applicants for grants to comply with the process to include providing information
- 5 and assistance in processing of grant awards;
- 6 (5) Recommend acceptance or rejection of proposed contracts and grants to be approved
- 7 by the director in accordance with the provisions of § 42-11-11;
- 8 (6) Coordinate with the approval of the director, and with the director of administration,
- 9 the approval of all contracts negotiated pursuant to the provisions of this chapter and the provisions
- 10 of § 42-11-11;
- 11 (7) Establish evidence-based standards to measure the success and performance of all
- 12 recipients of grants provided pursuant to the provisions of this chapter; and
- 13 (8) Perform all other duties as assigned by the director.

14 **23-17.29-5. Staff.**

15 The office of primary care training shall be staffed by the person or persons assigned by

16 the director.

17 **23-17.29-6. Contracts.**

18 In compliance with the provisions of § 42-11-11, the director shall have the authority to

19 enter into contracts for medical education to be conducted at primary care practice sites pursuant

20 to the provisions of § 23-17.29-7.

21 **23-17.29-7. Contract terms.**

22 (a) Any contract entered into pursuant to the authority granted in § 23-17.29-6 shall

23 contain, at a minimum, the following terms, conditions and provisions:

- 24 (1) The primary care site shall serve as an enhanced interdisciplinary clinical training site;
- 25 (2) The primary care site shall have achieved and shall maintain NCOA PCMH distinction;
- 26 (3) The primary care site shall provide integrated behavioral health services;
- 27 (4) The primary care site shall provide an agreed curriculum of training for physicians,
- 28 nurse practitioners and physician assistants; and

29 (5) Training shall include a minimum of five (5) hours didactic training and shall introduce

30 the trainees to the concept of PCMH and how the principles of the model have been operationalized

31 in the primary care delivery setting.

32 (b) The contract may include a grant award not to exceed ninety thousand dollars (\$90,000)

33 per primary care site contract recipient, per calendar year.

34 **23-17.29-8. Appropriations.**

1 (a) For the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024, there is hereby appropriated out of any money
2 in the treasury not otherwise appropriated, the sum of two million, seven hundred thousand dollars
3 (\$2,700,000) deposited into a restricted account to implement the primary care training sites
4 program established pursuant to the provisions of this chapter, and the state controller is hereby
5 authorized and directed to draw to the controller's orders upon the general treasurer for payment of
6 said sum, or so much thereof as may be from time to time required, upon receipt by the general
7 treasurer of properly authenticated vouchers submitted by the director.

8 (b) For fiscal year 2025-2026, and each fiscal year thereafter, the general assembly shall
9 annually appropriate a sum as it may deem necessary to carry out the purposes of this chapter, and
10 the state controller is hereby authorized and directed to draw the controller's orders upon the general
11 treasurer for the payment of the sum or sums or so much thereof as may be required from time to
12 time to be deposited in a restricted receipt account upon receipt by the general treasurer of properly
13 authenticated vouchers submitted by the director.

14 **23-17.29-9. Rules and regulations.**

15 The director shall promulgate rules and regulations to implement the provisions of this
16 chapter.

17 **23-17.29-10. Audits.**

18 (a) The director shall submit annually all financial records and receipts of disbursements
19 to the auditor general and the director of administration.

20 (b) The auditor general and the director of administration are authorized to review and audit
21 all records, receipts, disbursements and transactions concerning the primary care training sites
22 program and the funds associated with the primary care training sites.

23 **23-17.29-11. Reports.**

24 The director shall report annually to the general assembly and the governor no later than
25 December 31 of each year on the status and progress of the primary care training sites program
26 established and administered pursuant to the provisions of this chapter.

27 **23-17.29-12. Severability.**

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

1 SECTION 3. This act shall take effect on July 1, 2024.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
A N A C T
RELATING TO HEALTH AND SAFETY -- PRIMARY CARE TRAINING SITES PROGRAM

- 1 This act would establish the primary care training sites program to provide training for
2 physicians, nurse practitioners and physician assistants within the department of health (DOH).
3 This act would appropriate two million seven hundred thousand dollars (\$2,700,000) to implement
4 the program.
5 This act would take effect on July 1, 2024.

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