

The Public Health Preparedness Workforce Development Act, S. 1882

To address the critical public health preparedness workforce shortage at the federal, state and local level, Senators Hagel and Durbin introduced the Public Health Preparedness Workforce Development Act (S. 1882). This legislation amends the Public Health Service Act to establish various recruitment and retention programs designed to increase the number of highly-skilled and capable employees to enter the public health system as the existing staff is nearing retirement. The ratio of public health workers to the population has dropped from 219 per 100,000 in 1980 to 158 per 100,000 in 2000, while responsibilities of such workers have continued to expand. More specifically this legislation establishes the following:

Public Health Workforce Scholarship Program

Offers up to four years of scholarship funds for full-time employment at a federal, state, local, or tribal public health agency.

- *Eligibility:* full-time students enrolled, or accepted for enrollment, at an accredited educational institution in a course of study leading to a health professions degree or certificate in laboratory sciences, epidemiology, environmental health, health communications, health education and behavioral science, information sciences, or public administration.
- *Compensation:* for each of the four years, scholarship assistance may include tuition expenses, all reasonable educational expenses of the individual including fees, books, equipment, and laboratory expenses; and payment of a stipend of not more than \$1,200 per month for each month of the academic year involved (indexed to account for increases in the Consumer Price Index).
- *Appropriations:* \$35,000,000 for fiscal year 2008, and such sums as may be necessary for each of fiscal years 2009 through 2013.

Public Health Workforce Loan Repayment Program

Awards grants to public health agencies to operate state, local, and tribal public health workforce loan repayment programs.

- *Eligibility:* full-time or part-time students enrolled in an accredited academic educational institution; or who have graduated, within 10 years, from an accredited educational institution.
- *Compensation:* for each of the three years of obligated service \$35,000 or 1/3 of the eligible loan balance may be paid on behalf of the individual for their loans. The loan repayment may address the cost of tuition expenses and all other reasonable education expenses including fees, books and laboratory expenses.
- *Appropriations:* \$195,000,000 for fiscal year 2008, and such sums as may be necessary for each of fiscal years 2009 through 2013.

Training for Mid-Career Public Health Professionals

Awards competitive grants to eligible entities to award scholarships to mid-career public health professionals wishing to enroll in degree or professional training programs in public health preparedness or biodefense.

- *Appropriations:* \$30,000,000 for fiscal year 2008 and such sums as may be necessary for each of fiscal years 2009 through 2013.

Catalogue of Federal Public Health workforce Employment Opportunities

Establishes an on-line catalogue of public health workforce employment opportunities in the federal government through the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) website.

Sponsors: Durbin, Hagel, Boxer, Biden, Lincoln