To amend the Public Health Service Act to provide loan repayment incentives for physician assistants, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

November 5, 2015

Ms. Bass introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce

A BILL

To amend the Public Health Service Act to provide loan repayment incentives for physician assistants, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Physician Assistant Education Public Health Initiatives Act of 2015”.

SEC. 2. STUDENT LOAN REPAYMENT FOR CERTAIN PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS.

(a) In General.—Part C of title VII of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 293k et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:
“Subpart III—Physician Assistants

“SEC. 749C. FACULTY POSITIONS IN PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT EDUCATION PROGRAM LOAN REPAYMENT.

“(a) In General.—

“(1) Contracts.—Subject to paragraph (2), the Secretary shall enter into contracts with eligible individuals under which such an individual agrees to serve as a full-time member of the faculty at a graduate-level physician assistant education program (as defined in section 799B) in consideration of the Federal Government agreeing to pay, for each year of such service, at the end of each such year, not more than $10,000 of the principal and interest of the educational loans of such individual.

“(2) Cap.—The Secretary may not pay more than $45,000 under this section for any individual.

“(b) Definitions.—

“(1) Eligible Individual.—In this section, the term ‘eligible individual’ means an individual who—

“(A) is a citizen, national, or lawful permanent resident of the United States;

“(B) has a degree from a graduate-level physician assistant education program;

“(C) has contracted with a graduate-level physician assistant education program to serve
as a member of the faculty for not less than 2 years; and

“(D) either—

“(i) holds a license as a physician assistant; or

“(ii) is qualified for licensure as a physician assistant in a State where such individual serves as a full-time member of the faculty at a graduate-level physician assistant education program.

“(e) Authorization of Appropriations.—There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section such sums as may be necessary for each of the fiscal years 2017 through 2021.

“SEC. 749D. PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PRIMARY CARE PROVIDER LOAN REPAYMENT.

“(a) In General.—The Secretary shall enter into contracts with eligible individuals under which such an individual agrees to serve for at least 2 years as a full-time physician assistant in a health professional shortage area, in a medically underserved area, or at a health center in consideration of the Federal Government agreeing to pay the eligible amount of the principal and interest of the educational loans of such individual.

“(b) Definitions.—In this section:
“(1) Eligible Amount.—The term ‘eligible amount’ means, with respect to an eligible individual who has entered into a contract under subsection (a), with respect to the aggregate principal and interest on educational loans of such individual outstanding on the date such individual began the service described in such contract—

“(A) for each of the first two years of service under such contract, 30 percent of such aggregate principal and interest; and

“(B) for the third year, if any, of service under such contract, 25 percent of such aggregate principal and interest.

“(2) Eligible Individual.—The term ‘eligible individual’ means an individual who—

“(A) is a citizen, national, or lawful permanent resident of the United States;

“(B) has a degree from a graduate-level physician assistant education program; and

“(C) has contracted with a health care provider located in a health professional shortage area or a medically underserved area or with a health center to serve as a physician assistant for not less than 2 years.
“(3) Health center.—The term ‘health center’ has the meaning given such term in section 330(a).

“(4) Medically underserved area.—The term ‘medically underserved area’ has the meaning given the term ‘medically underserved community’ in section 799B(6).

“(5) Health professional shortage area.—The term ‘health professional shortage area’ has the meaning given such term in section 332(a).

“(c) Authorization of Appropriations.—There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section such sums as may be necessary for each of the fiscal years 2017 through 2021.”.

(b) Effective Date.—The amendment made by this section shall apply with respect to service occurring on or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 3. EXTENDING AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS TO SUPPORT FACULTY DEVELOPMENT AND DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS.

Section 740 of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 293d) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by inserting after “2014” the following: “and each of the fiscal years 2017 through 2021”;
(2) in subsection (b), by inserting after “2014” the following: “and such sums as may be necessary for each of the fiscal years 2017 through 2021”; and

(3) in subsection (c), by inserting after “2014” the following: “and each of the fiscal years 2017 through 2021”.

SEC. 4. REAUTHORIZATION OF PRIMARY CARE TRAINING AND ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMS.

Section 747(c) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 293k(c)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by inserting after “2014” the following: “and each of fiscal years 2017 through 2021”; and

(2) in paragraph (2), by striking “Fifteen” and inserting “At least 15”.

SEC. 5. GRANTS FOR RESEARCH ON PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT EDUCATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Health and Human Services shall provide grants to eligible entities to fund eligible researchers to increase research on physician assistant education.

(b) APPLICATION.—An eligible entity desiring a grant under this section shall submit to the Secretary an application at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Secretary may require.
(c) CONDITION OF RECEIPT.—As a condition of receipt of a grant under this section, an entity shall each year award not fewer than eight eligible researchers funds to support physician assistant education research.

(d) REPORT REQUIREMENT.—An entity receiving a grant under this section shall provide to the Secretary with respect to each year that such entity receives funds under this section a report on the activities conducted using such funds, including—

   (1) the number of researchers supported during such year by such entity using such funds;

   (2) a list of the researchers counted under paragraph (1), organized by researcher, including—

      (A) the institution such researcher is affiliated with; and

      (B) the research topic of such researcher;

   (3) citations to published clinical and scientific research by researchers described in paragraph (1) that is attributable to support under this section;

   (4) an evaluation of the benefits of grants under this section; and

   (5) any other information the Secretary may request.

(e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:
(1) **ELIGIBLE ENTITY.**—The term “eligible entity” means an organization that—

(A) is a non-profit organization; and

(B) has demonstrated expertise in physician assistant education and faculty development.

(2) **ELIGIBLE RESEARCHER.**—The term “eligible researcher” means, with respect to an eligible entity, a researcher that—

(A) has demonstrated expertise in physician assistant education and faculty development; and

(B) at such time and in such manner as such entity may require, provides such entity with a research proposal on improving physician assistant education and faculty development.

(3) **PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT EDUCATION.**—The term “physician assistant education” means selecting, educating, and graduating students in accredited graduate physician assistant educational programs.

(4) **SECRETARY.**—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

(f) **AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**—There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be
necessary to carry out this section for each of fiscal years 2017 through 2021.