119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

# S. 3783

To amend the Public Health Service Act to direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services, acting through the Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use, to establish a Mental and Behavioral Health Career Promotion Grant Program, and for other purposes.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

FEBRUARY 5, 2026

Mr. PADILLA (for himself, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. BOOKER, and Mr. MERKLEY) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

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# A BILL

To amend the Public Health Service Act to direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services, acting through the Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use, to establish a Mental and Behavioral Health Career Promotion Grant Program, 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 ''Mental Health Career Promotion Act''.

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**SEC. 2. MENTAL AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CAREER PROMOTION GRANT PROGRAM.**

Subpart 3 of part B of title V of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 290bb–31 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

**"SEC. 520O. MENTAL AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CAREER PROMOTION GRANT PROGRAM.**

''(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, acting through the Assistant Secretary (referred to in this section as the 'Secretary'), shall establish a program, to be known as the 'Mental and Behavioral Health Career Promotion Grant Program', to award grants to eligible entities to establish or expand eligible mental and behavioral health career promotion programs in schools served by local educational agencies or in public junior or community colleges.

''(b) ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.—To be eligible to receive a grant under this section, an entity shall be a partnership that includes—

''(1)(A) 1 or more local educational agencies, or a consortium of such local educational agencies; or

''(B) a State educational agency;

''(2) 1 or more public junior or community colleges, or a consortium of such public junior or community colleges; and

''(3) at least 1—

''(A) community-based mental or behavioral health provider (such as a certified community behavioral health clinic, a community mental health center, an opioid treatment program, or a nonprofit mental health or substance use professional association); or

''(B) other community-based entity, as determined appropriate by the Secretary (such as a State or local behavioral health authority, a human service agency, a child welfare agency, or an institution of higher education, such as a historically Black college or university).

''(c) ELIGIBLE MENTAL AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CAREER PROMOTION PROGRAMS.—To be eligible for a grant under this section, a mental and behavioral health career promotion program shall promote careers in mental and behavioral health to students in grades 9 through 12 or in public junior or community colleges, such as by—

''(1) providing educational presentations to students that increase exposure to and knowledge of careers in the mental and behavioral health field;

''(2) coordinating internships and externships for students who demonstrate an interest in mental and behavioral health;

''(3) providing opportunities for students to interact with and shadow mental and behavioral health care professionals;

''(4) providing students with mentorships and experiential learning opportunities; or

''(5) partnering with local institutions of higher education and community behavioral health organizations to promote careers in mental and behavioral health.

''(d) ACTIVITY REQUIREMENT.—A grant awarded under this section may only be used for activities that are developmentally, linguistically, and culturally appropriate.

''(e) AWARD DURATION; RENEWAL.—A grant awarded under this section shall be for a period of 5 years and may be renewed.

''(f) GEOGRAPHICAL DIVERSITY.—The Secretary shall ensure that grants awarded under this section cover a diverse range of geographical areas.

''(g) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—The Secretary may provide technical assistance in seeking grants under this section to high-need local educational agencies and to public junior and community colleges.

''(h) EVALUATION AND MEASURES OF OUTCOMES.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall develop a fiscally appropriate process for evaluating activi-

ties carried out through grants awarded under this section. Under such process, the Secretary shall—

"(A) provide to recipients of such grants—

"(i) guidelines for the submission to the Secretary of data concerning such activities; and

"(ii) measures of outcomes to be used by such recipients in evaluating the effectiveness of such activities (including outcomes related to the student, family, and local educational systems supported by such activities);

"(B) require each such recipient to submit to the Secretary annual reports—

"(i) containing data on such activities carried out by the recipient; and

"(ii) that use the measures of outcomes described in subparagraph (A)(ii) to evaluate the effectiveness of such activities; and

"(C) not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this section, and annually thereafter, submit to Congress a report describing the results and effectiveness of the programs under this section.

''(2) LIMITATION.—A recipient of a grant under this section may not use more than 10 percent of the amounts received for data collection, performance measurement, and performance assessment.

''(i) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

''(1) CAREER IN MENTAL OR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH.—The term 'career in mental or behavioral health' means an occupation the primary intent and function of which is the direct treatment or recovery support of patients with, or in recovery from, a mental or behavioral health disorder, which may include an occupation as—

''(A) a physician (including a physician with a degree of Doctor of Medicine or Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine);

''(B) an advanced practice registered nurse practitioner;

''(C) a social worker;

''(D) a marriage or family therapist;

''(E) a counselor (including an addiction- or mental health-licensed professional);

''(F) a psychologist;

''(G) a psychiatrist (including a child or adolescent psychiatrist);

"(H) a psychiatric aide;

"(I) a neurologist;

"(J) a peer support specialist;

"(K) an addiction specialist or prevention specialist;

"(L) a community health worker; and

"(M) a physician assistant.

"(2) ESEA TERMS.—The terms 'local educational agency' and 'State educational agency' have the meanings given such terms in section 8101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.

"(3) HEA TERMS.—(A) The terms 'institution of higher education', 'high-need local educational agency', and 'junior or community college' have the meanings given such terms, respectively, in sections 101(a), 200, and 312(f) of the Higher Education Act of 1965.

"(B) The term 'historically Black college or university' has the meaning given the term 'part B institution' under section 322 of the Higher Education Act of 1965.

''(j) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section $50,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2026 through 2030.''.

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