

House Bill 659 (AS PASSED HOUSE AND SENATE)

By: Representatives Greene of the 154th, Taylor of the 173rd, Hawkins of the 27th, Jasperse of the 11th, and Hagan of the 156th

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Chapters 7 and 34 of Title 31 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating
2 to regulation and construction of hospitals and other health care facilities and medical
3 professionals for rural assistance, respectively, so as to permit administration of certain
4 medications to residents of personal care homes and assisted living facilities; to expand
5 medical education funding and the service cancelable loan program to include optometrists;
6 to provide for related matters; to provide for an effective date; to repeal conflicting laws; and
7 for other purposes.

8 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

9 **SECTION 1.**

10 Chapter 7 of Title 31 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to regulation and
11 construction of hospitals and other health care facilities, is amended by revising
12 subparagraph (h)(4)(B) of Code Section 31-7-12, relating to personal care homes, licensing
13 and registration, requirements, exemptions, and enforcement, as follows:

14 "(B) Administer insulin, epinephrine, GLP-1, and B12 pursuant to physician direction
15 and protocol;"

42 loans and scholarships under Part 6 of Article 7 of Chapter 3 of Title 20 and to loans under
43 Code Section 31-34-4."

44 **SECTION 4.**

45 Said chapter is further amended by revising paragraph (1) of subsection (a) and paragraph (1)
46 of subsection (c) of Code Section 31-34-4, relating to loan applicant qualifications and rules
47 and regulations, as follows:

48 "(a)(1) A physician, dentist, optometrist, physician assistant, or advanced practice
49 registered nurse who receives a loan under the program provided for in this article shall
50 be a citizen or national of the United States licensed to practice his or her health care
51 profession within the State of Georgia at the time the loan is made, and shall be a
52 graduate of an accredited graduate medical education program or other applicable
53 accredited health care education program located in the United States which has received
54 accreditation or provisional accreditation by the Accreditation Council for Graduate
55 Medical Education, or the American Osteopathic Association, or such other applicable
56 accreditation for other health care education programs; as determined by the board."

57 "(c)(1) The board is authorized to consider, among other criteria for granting loans under
58 the provisions of this article, the state residency status and home area of the applying
59 physician, dentist, optometrist, physician assistant, or advanced practice registered nurse
60 and to give priority to those applicants who are physicians, dentists, optometrists,
61 physician assistants, and advanced practice registered nurses actively practicing or
62 beginning active practice in specialties experiencing shortages or distribution problems
63 in rural areas of this state as determined by the board pursuant to rules and regulations
64 adopted by it in accordance with this article."

65 **SECTION 5.**

66 Said chapter is further amended by revising subsections (a) and (b) of Code Section
67 31-34-4.1, relating to grants to hospitals and other entities, use of funds, and rules and
68 regulations authorized, as follows:

69 "(a) After providing priority consideration to granting loans pursuant to Code Section
70 31-34-4, the board is authorized to make grants to hospitals and, as determined by the
71 board, other health care entities, local governments, and civic organizations in underserved
72 rural areas of Georgia, provided that any such hospital, health care entity, local
73 government, or civic organization matches such grant in an amount not less than such
74 grant. Such grants shall be for the purpose of enhancing recruitment efforts in bringing
75 physicians, dentists, optometrists, physician assistants, and advanced practice registered
76 nurses to such areas.

77 (b) Acceptable expenditures of grant funds by a hospital or other health care entity, local
78 government, or civic organization include, but are not limited to, medical or health care
79 education loan repayment, salary supplements for physicians, dentists, optometrists,
80 physician assistants, and advanced practice registered nurses, and additional support staff
81 for a physician's, dentist's, optometrist's, physician assistant's, or advanced practice
82 registered nurse's office. Grant funds shall not be used for hiring or paying a recruiting
83 firm or individual recruiter."

84 **SECTION 6.**

85 Said chapter is further amended by revising Code Section 31-34-5, relating to service
86 cancelable loan, amount, repayment, and determination of underserved rural areas, as
87 follows:

88 "31-34-5.

89 (a)(1) The board shall have the authority to grant to each applicant approved by the board
90 on a one-year renewable basis a service cancelable loan for a period not exceeding four

91 years; provided, however, that, for applicants ~~that~~ who are dental students, service
92 cancelable loans shall be for a period of four years. The amount of the loan shall be
93 determined by the board, but such amount shall be related to the applicant's outstanding
94 obligations incurred as a direct result of completing medical or health care education and
95 training.

96 (2) A loan or loans to each approved applicant shall be granted on the condition that the
97 full amount of the loan or loans shall be repaid to the State of Georgia in services to be
98 rendered by the applicant's practicing his or her profession in a board approved physician,
99 dentist, optometrist, physician assistant, or advanced practice registered nurse
100 underserved rural area of Georgia. For each full year of practicing his or her profession
101 in such underserved rural area, the physician, dentist, optometrist, physician assistant, or
102 advanced practice registered nurse who obtained the loan shall receive credit for the full
103 amount of one year's loan plus regular interest which accrued on such amount.

104 (b)(1) The board shall have the authority to make grants to each applicant hospital or
105 other health care entity, local government, or civic organization approved by the board
106 on a yearly basis, renewable each year at the discretion of the board. The amount of the
107 grant shall be determined by the board, but such amount shall be related to and shall not
108 exceed the applicant's proposed expenditures to enhance recruitment efforts in bringing
109 one or more physicians, dentists, optometrists, physician assistants, or advanced practice
110 registered nurses to the underserved rural area.

111 (2) A grant to an approved applicant shall be made on any condition or conditions
112 determined by the board, which may include, but not be limited to, that one or more
113 physicians, dentists, optometrists, physician assistants, or advanced practice registered
114 nurses are employed and retained in the underserved rural area for a prescribed minimum
115 length of time.

116 (c) In making a determination of physician, dentist, optometrist, physician assistant, or
117 advanced practice registered nurse underserved rural areas of Georgia, the board shall seek

118 the advice and assistance of the Department of Public Health, the University of Georgia
119 Cooperative Extension Service, the Department of Community Affairs, and such other
120 public or private associations or organizations as the board determines to be of assistance
121 in making such determinations. Criteria to determine physician, dentist, optometrist,
122 physician assistant, or advanced practice registered nurse underserved rural areas shall
123 include, but shall not be limited to, relevant statistical data related to the following:

- 124 (1) The ratio of physicians, dentists, optometrists, physician assistants, or advanced
125 practice registered nurses to population in the area;
126 (2) Indications of the health status of the population in the area;
127 (3) The poverty level and dependent age groups of the population in the area;
128 (4) Indications of community support for more physicians, dentists, optometrists,
129 physician assistants, or advanced practice registered nurses in the area; and
130 (5) Indications that access to the physician's, dentist's, optometrist's, physician assistant's,
131 or advanced practice registered nurse's services is available to every person in the
132 underserved area regardless of ability to pay."

133 **SECTION 7.**

134 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.