

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2274

To amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to improve education opportunities for physician assistants, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 29, 2021

Ms. BASS (for herself and Mr. TRONE) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and Labor

A BILL

To amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to improve education opportunities for physician assistants, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Physician Assistant
5 Higher Education Modernization Act of 2021”.

1 **SEC. 2. REINSTATEMENT OF AUTHORITY TO MAKE FED-**
 2 **ERAL DIRECT SUBSIDIZED STAFFORD LOANS**
 3 **TO PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS AND OTHER**
 4 **GRADUATE HEALTH PROFESSIONS STU-**
 5 **DENTS.**

6 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 455(a)(3) of the Higher
 7 Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1087e(a)(3)) is amend-
 8 ed by striking subparagraph (B) and inserting the fol-
 9 lowing new subparagraph:

10 “(B) EXCEPTIONS.—Subparagraph (A)
 11 shall not apply to—

12 “(i) an individual enrolled in course
 13 work specified in paragraph (3)(B) or
 14 (4)(B) of 484(b); or

15 “(ii) a graduate student in a—

16 “(I) physician assistant education
 17 program (as defined in section 799B
 18 of the Public Health Service Act (42
 19 U.S.C. 295p)); or

20 “(II) any other health professions
 21 program, as determined by the Sec-
 22 retary.”.

23 (b) INAPPLICABILITY OF TITLE IV NEGOTIATED
 24 RULEMAKING AND MASTER CALENDAR EXCEPTION.—
 25 Sections 482(c) and 492 of the Higher Education Act of
 26 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1089(c), 1098a) shall not apply to the

1 amendments made by this section, or to any regulations
 2 promulgated under those amendments.

3 **SEC. 3. MAKING PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS ELIGIBLE FOR IN-**
 4 **CENTIVES WHEN SERVING AS PRIMARY CARE**
 5 **PROVIDERS OR FACULTY MEMBERS.**

6 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 428K of the Higher Edu-
 7 cation Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1078–11) is amended—

8 (1) in subsection (b), by adding at the end the
 9 following:

10 “(19) PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS.—The individual
 11 is a physician assistant employed full-time—

12 “(A) as a physician assistant in a clinical
 13 setting providing primary care services; or

14 “(B) as a member of the physician assist-
 15 ant faculty at a physician assistant education
 16 program (as defined in section 799B of the
 17 Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 295p)).”;

18 (2) in subsection (g), by adding at the end the
 19 following:

20 “(11) PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT.—The term ‘phy-
 21 sician assistant’ means an individual who—

22 “(A) graduated from a physician assistant
 23 education program (as defined in section 799B
 24 of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C.
 25 295p));

1 “(B) is certified as a physician assistant by
2 the National Commission on the Certification of
3 Physician Assistants or any successor organiza-
4 tion; and

5 “(C) either—

6 “(i) holds a valid and unrestricted li-
7 cense to practice medicine as a physician
8 assistant in the State in which the physi-
9 cian assistant practices in a clinical set-
10 ting; or

11 “(ii) is qualified for licensure in the
12 State where the individual is employed as
13 a full-time physician assistant faculty
14 member of a physician assistant education
15 program (as defined in section 799B of the
16 Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C.
17 295p)).”; and

18 (3) in subsection (h), by striking “fiscal year
19 2009” and inserting “fiscal year 2022”.

20 (b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by
21 this section shall apply with respect to employment occur-
22 ring on or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

1 **SEC. 4. GRANT ELIGIBILITY FOR PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT**
2 **PROGRAMS AT HISTORICALLY BLACK COL-**
3 **LEGES AND UNIVERSITIES AND PREDOMI-**
4 **NANTLY BLACK INSTITUTIONS.**

5 (a) HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVER-
6 SITIES.—Section 723 of the Higher Education Act of
7 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1136a) is amended—

8 (1) in subsection (a)(1), by inserting “physician
9 assistant studies,” after “allied health,”;

10 (2) in subsection (b)(2)(A), by inserting “physi-
11 cian assistant studies,” after “allied health,”; and

12 (3) in subsection (d)—

13 (A) in paragraph (4), by inserting “physi-
14 cian assistant studies,” after “allied health,”;

15 (B) in paragraph (11), by striking “and”
16 at the end;

17 (C) by redesignating paragraph (12) as
18 paragraph (13); and

19 (D) by inserting after paragraph (11) the
20 following:

21 “(12) in the case of a grant for a physician as-
22 sistant education program (as defined in section
23 799B of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C.
24 295p))—

25 “(A) creating or improving facilities for
26 internet or other distance education tech-

nologies, including purchase or rental of telecommunications technology equipment or services; and

“(B) collaborating with other institutions of higher education to expand postbaccalaureate degree offerings; and”.

(b) PREDOMINANTLY BLACK INSTITUTIONS.—Section 724 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1136b) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(1), by inserting “physician assistant studies,” after “allied health,”;

(2) in subsection (b)(2)(A), by inserting “physician assistant studies,” after “allied health,”; and

(3) in subsection (d)—

(A) in paragraph (4), by inserting “physician assistant studies,” after “allied health,”;

(B) by redesignating paragraph (12) as paragraph (13); and

(C) by inserting after paragraph (11) the following:

“(12) in the case of a grant for a physician assistant education program (as defined in section 799B of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 295p))—

1 “(A) creating or improving facilities for
 2 internet or other distance education tech-
 3 nologies, including purchase or rental of tele-
 4 communications technology equipment or serv-
 5 ices; and

6 “(B) collaborating with other institutions
 7 of higher education to expand postbaccalaureate
 8 degree offerings; and”.

9 (c) EXTENSION OF AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIA-
 10 TIONS.—Subsections (a) and (b) of section 725 of the
 11 Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1136c) are each
 12 amended by striking “fiscal year 2009” and inserting “fis-
 13 cal year 2022”.

14 **SEC. 5. PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT POSTBACCALAUREATE OP-**
 15 **PORTUNITIES FOR HISPANIC AMERICANS.**

16 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 514 of the Higher Edu-
 17 cation Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1102c) is amended by add-
 18 ing at the end the following:

19 “(d) PRIORITY FOR PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT EDU-
 20 CATION PROGRAMS.—The Secretary shall give preference
 21 to an application by an eligible institution for a grant
 22 under this part that demonstrates that the grant funds
 23 awarded under this part will be used to support physician
 24 assistant education programs (as defined in section 799B
 25 of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 295p)).”.

1 (b) EXTENSION OF AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIA-
 2 TIONS.—Section 528(a)(2) of the Higher Education Act
 3 of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1103g(a)(2)) is amended—

4 (1) by striking “\$100,000,000 for fiscal year
 5 2009 and”; and

6 (2) by inserting “fiscal year 2022 and” after
 7 “such sums as may be necessary for”.

8 **SEC. 6. SUPPORTING STUDENT MATRICULATION AND PHY-**
 9 **SICIAN ASSISTANT EDUCATION PROGRAMS**
 10 **AT RURAL SERVING INSTITUTIONS OF HIGH-**
 11 **ER EDUCATION.**

12 Section 861 of part Q of title VIII of the Higher Edu-
 13 cation Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1161q) is amended—

14 (1) in subsection (f)—

15 (A) by striking “three of the following
 16 four” and inserting “four of the following five”;
 17 and

18 (B) by adding at the end the following:

19 “(5) To improve health workforce distribution
 20 in rural areas by supporting health professions stu-
 21 dent matriculation or the development of new health
 22 professions programs, including physician assistant
 23 education programs (as defined in section 799B of
 24 the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 295p)).”;
 25 and

- 1 (2) in subsection (g), by striking “fiscal year
- 2 2009” and inserting “fiscal year 2022”.

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