



News Release

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Utah Department of Health Awards Health Care Workforce Grants

SALT LAKE CITY - The Utah Department of Health (UDOH) has awarded \$422,900 in grants to health care professionals under the Utah Health Care Workforce Financial Assistance Program. The main purpose of the Program is to increase the number of health care professionals practicing in underserved areas of the state by providing financial assistance to health care professionals to repay loans taken for educational expenses. In exchange, the professionals agree to serve for a specific period of time at an approved site serving underserved populations.

The Utah Health Care Workforce Financial Assistance Program conducts a competitive award process, using a statutory committee to review and make recommendations for awards. Both the health care professional and the employment site must qualify and apply to the Program to be considered. Health care professionals eligible to apply to the Program include general dentists, primary care physicians, primary care mid-level practitioners, nurses (L.P.N. through Ph.D. level), and mental health therapists. Employment sites that serve a large proportion of medically underserved populations and have a difficult time recruiting and/or retaining health care professionals are eligible for the Program. Employment sites must accept Medicaid, Medicare, CHIP, and PCN in order to be considered eligible for the Program.

During the current State Fiscal Year, 97 health care professionals applied to the Program, and 30 health care professionals were awarded a total of \$422,900 in funding for a minimum two (2) year service obligation at an employment site serving Utah's medically underserved populations. These health care professionals will be serving at 26 approved employment sites around the State.

Since its inception in 1990, the Utah Health Care Workforce Financial Assistance Program has been an effective tool in increasing the number of health care professionals serving Utah's medically underserved populations. The Program has awarded 295 educational loan repayment grants and 86 educational scholarships using \$7.7 million in

State General Funds for a total of 1,024 years of service to Utah medically underserved areas/populations.

For further information on the Program, contact the UDOH at 801-538-6214 or visit our web site at: <http://health.utah.gov/primarycare/scholarloanmenu.html>.

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The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public's health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death, assuring access to affordable, quality health care, and promoting healthy lifestyles.

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