

117TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 4425

To amend the Public Health Service Act to authorize a scholarship and loan repayment program to incentivize physicians to enter into the field of sickle cell disease research and treatment, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JUNE 16, 2022

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

A BILL

To amend the Public Health Service Act to authorize a scholarship and loan repayment program to incentivize physicians to enter into the field of sickle cell disease research and treatment, 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 “Sickle Cell Care Ex-
5 pansion Act of 2022”.

1 **SEC. 2. ADVANCING TREATMENT AND RESEARCH PER-**
 2 **TAINING TO SICKLE CELL DISEASE.**

3 Part D of title III of the Public Health Service Act
 4 (42 U.S.C. 254b et seq.) is amended by adding at the end
 5 the following:

6 **“Subpart XIII—Advancing Treatment and Research**
 7 **Pertaining to Sickle Cell Disease**

8 **“SEC. 340J. SCHOLARSHIP AND LOAN REPAYMENT PRO-**
 9 **GRAM.**

10 “(a) IN GENERAL.—To advance learning regarding
 11 sickle cell disease and to enhance the supply of physicians
 12 to treat such disease, especially with respect to adult popu-
 13 lations, the Secretary, acting through the Administrator
 14 of the Health Resources and Services Administration,
 15 shall carry out a program consisting of entering into con-
 16 tracts with individuals under which—

17 “(1) the Secretary awards a scholarship under
 18 subsection (b) or agrees to make loan repayments
 19 under subsection (c) with respect to each individual;
 20 and

21 “(2) the individual agrees to serve for a period
 22 (in this section referred to as the ‘period of obligated
 23 service’) as a physician engaged in—

24 “(A) sickle cell disease research; or

25 “(B) service in a public or private setting
 26 that is primarily focused on treatment and edu-

1 cation related to sickle cell disease in a health
2 care facility, clinic, rural health clinic, mobile
3 medical asset, or other facility as determined by
4 the Secretary.

5 “(b) SCHOLARSHIPS.—

6 “(1) ELIGIBILITY.—To be eligible to participate
7 in the scholarship program under this section, an in-
8 dividual shall—

9 “(A) be accepted for enrollment, or be en-
10 rolled, as a full-time student in an accredited
11 (as determined by the Secretary) educational
12 institution in a State and in a course of study
13 or program offered by such institution and ap-
14 proved by the Secretary, leading to a degree in
15 medicine or osteopathic medicine;

16 “(B) submit an application to participate
17 in the scholarship program; and

18 “(C) sign and submit to the Secretary, at
19 the time of submittal of such application, a
20 written contract (described in paragraph (2)) to
21 accept payment of a scholarship and to serve
22 (in accordance with this section) for the appli-
23 cable period of obligated service.

1 “(2) WRITTEN CONTRACT.—The written con-
2 tract under this subsection between the Secretary
3 and an individual shall contain—

4 “(A) an agreement that—

5 “(i) subject to paragraph (1), the Sec-
6 retary agrees to provide the individual with
7 a scholarship in each such school year or
8 years for a period of years (not to exceed
9 four school years) determined by the indi-
10 vidual, during which period the individual
11 is pursuing a course of study described in
12 paragraph (1)(A); and

13 “(ii) subject to paragraph (1), the in-
14 dividual agrees to—

15 “(I) accept provision of such a
16 scholarship to the individual;

17 “(II) maintain enrollment in a
18 course of study described in para-
19 graph (1)(A) until the individual com-
20 pletes the course of study;

21 “(III) maintain an acceptable
22 level of academic standing;

23 “(IV) complete a residency in a
24 specialty that the Secretary deter-

1 mines is consistent with pursuit of a
2 fellowship in hematology;

3 “(V) complete a fellowship in the
4 specialty of hematology; and

5 “(VI) serve for a time period
6 equal to one year for each school year
7 for which the individual was provided
8 a scholarship under this section;

9 “(B) a provision that any financial obliga-
10 tion of the United States arising out of the con-
11 tract and any obligation of the individual which
12 is conditioned thereon, is contingent upon funds
13 being appropriated for scholarships under this
14 section;

15 “(C) a statement of the damages to which
16 the United States is entitled if the individual
17 should breach the contract; and

18 “(D) such other statements of the rights
19 and liabilities of the Secretary and of the indi-
20 vidual as the Secretary determines appropriate,
21 not inconsistent with the provisions of this sec-
22 tion.

23 “(c) LOAN REPAYMENTS.—

1 “(1) ELIGIBILITY.—To be eligible to participate
2 in the loan repayment program under this section,
3 an individual shall—

4 “(A) have a degree in medicine or osteo-
5 pathic medicine; be enrolled in an approved
6 graduate training program in medicine or osteo-
7 pathic medicine; or be enrolled as a full-time
8 student in an accredited (as determined by the
9 Secretary) educational institution in a State,
10 and in the final year of a course of study of-
11 fered by such institution and approved by the
12 Secretary, leading to a degree in medicine or
13 osteopathic medicine;

14 “(B) submit an application to participate
15 in the loan repayment program; and

16 “(C) sign and submit to the Secretary, at
17 the time of submittal of such application, a
18 written contract (described in paragraph (2)) to
19 accept payment by the Secretary of the edu-
20 cational loans of the individual in consideration
21 of the individual serving for a period of obli-
22 gated service.

23 “(2) WRITTEN CONTRACT.—The written con-
24 tract under this subsection between the Secretary
25 and an individual shall contain—

1 “(A) an agreement that—

2 “(i) subject to paragraph (1), the Sec-
3 retary agrees to pay on behalf of the indi-
4 vidual the principal, interest, and related
5 expenses on government and commercial
6 loans received by the individual regarding
7 the undergraduate or graduate education
8 of the individual (or both), which loans
9 were made for—

10 “(I) tuition expenses;

11 “(II) all other reasonable edu-
12 cational expenses, including fees,
13 books, and laboratory expenses, in-
14 curred by the individual; or

15 “(III) reasonable living expenses
16 as determined by the Secretary; and

17 “(ii) subject to paragraph (1), the in-
18 dividual agrees to—

19 “(I) accept loan payments on be-
20 half of the individual;

21 “(II) maintain enrollment in a
22 course of study described in para-
23 graph (1)(A) (if applicable) until the
24 individual completes the course of
25 study;

1 “(III) maintain an acceptable
2 level of academic standing;

3 “(IV) complete a residency in a
4 specialty that the Secretary deter-
5 mines is consistent with pursuit of a
6 fellowship in hematology; and

7 “(V) complete a fellowship in he-
8 matology;

9 “(B) a provision that any financial obliga-
10 tion of the United States arising out of the con-
11 tract and any obligation of the individual which
12 is conditioned thereon, is contingent upon funds
13 being appropriated for loan repayments under
14 this section;

15 “(C) a statement of the damages to which
16 the United States is entitled if the individual
17 should breach the contract; and

18 “(D) such other statements of the rights
19 and liabilities of the Secretary and of the indi-
20 vidual as the Secretary determines appropriate,
21 not inconsistent with the provisions of this sec-
22 tion.

23 “(d) PRIORITY.—In awarding contracts under this
24 section for scholarships and loan repayments, the Sec-

1 retary may prioritize making awards to individuals from
2 disadvantaged backgrounds.

3 “(e) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term ‘sickle
4 cell disease research’ means research into the detection,
5 diagnosis, treatment, or control of sickle cell disease.

6 “(f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—To
7 carry out this section, there is authorized to be appro-
8 priated \$150,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2023
9 through 2028.

10 **“SEC. 340J-1. COMMUNITY-BASED GRANTS TO ENGAGE THE**
11 **SICKLE CELL DISEASE POPULATION BY DE-**
12 **SIGNING EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY PRO-**
13 **GRAMS AND POLICIES FOR HEALTH AND**
14 **COMMUNITY SERVICES.**

15 “(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall carry out a
16 program consisting of awarding grants to eligible entities
17 for the establishment and support of education and advo-
18 cacy programs that—

19 “(1) engage the sickle cell disease population,
20 their families, or State and local governments in
21 order to—

22 “(A) improve sickle cell disease health lit-
23 eracy;

1 “(B) disseminate information on health
2 and community services related to sickle cell
3 disease; or

4 “(C) improve the care and treatment deci-
5 sion-making process related to sickle cell dis-
6 ease; and

7 “(2) may include education and advocacy re-
8 garding fertility preservation and surrogacy options
9 for individuals with sickle cell disease.

10 “(b) APPLICATIONS.—To seek a grant under sub-
11 section (a), an eligible entity shall submit an application
12 to the Secretary at such time, in such manner, and con-
13 taining such information and assurances as the Secretary
14 may require.

15 “(c) CONSIDERATION.—In determining whether to
16 award a grant under this section to an applicant, and the
17 amount of a grant under this section, the Secretary shall
18 consider the need for sickle cell education or services in
19 the area to be served using the grant.

20 “(d) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term ‘eligible
21 entity’ means—

22 “(1) a community-based organization or faith-
23 based organization or clinic that provides services to,
24 or engages in, advocacy for individuals with sickle
25 cell disease;

11 “(e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—To
12 carry out this section, there is authorized to be appro-
13 priated \$50,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2023 through
14 2028.

17 “(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall carry out a
18 program of awarding grants to eligible entities for the es-
19 tablishment and support of programs—

“(A) provide transition support through a dedicated transition coordinator and management of care for sickle cell disease patients between the ages of 18 and 29 who are aging out

1 of pediatric care and receiving adult care for
2 sickle cell disease;

3 “(B) assist sickle cell patients in identi-
4 fying and maintaining adult primary care pro-
5 viders and adult specialists for sickle cell dis-
6 ease compatible with the patient’s health insur-
7 ance; and

8 “(C) provide support services, including
9 mental health services, for the management of
10 the patient’s treatments and medical appoint-
11 ments throughout the transition to adult care;
12 and

13 “(2) which, in the case of an eligible entity that
14 is a hospital or an institute of higher education, may
15 include providing training to adult sickle cell disease
16 care specialists on the medical needs of young sickle
17 cell disease patients, through—

18 “(A) 1- to 2-year long fellowships for any
19 individual that has completed a residency in
20 medicine, combined internal medicine and pedi-
21 atrics, or family medicine; or

22 “(B) short-term programs and workshops.

23 “(b) ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.—To be eligible to receive
24 a grant under this section, an entity shall—

1 “(1) be a nonprofit organization providing com-
2 prehensive care to populations with sickle cell dis-
3 ease, including a hospital or an institute of higher
4 education, and including any such nonprofit organi-
5 zation that is a faith-based organization or commu-
6 nity-based organization; and

7 “(2) submit an application to the Secretary at
8 such time, in such manner, and containing such in-
9 formation and assurances as the Secretary may re-
10 quire.

11 “(c) CONSIDERATION.—In determining whether to
12 award a grant under this section to an eligible entity, and
13 the amount of a grant under this section, the Secretary
14 shall consider the size of the population the eligible entity
15 intends to serve.

16 “(d) REPORTS.—Eligible entities receiving a grant
17 under this section shall submit, during the grant period,
18 an annual report to the Secretary. Each such report
19 shall—

20 “(1) use an established and recognized registry
21 on measuring quality metrics specified by the Sec-
22 retary; and

23 “(2) include—

24 “(A) a description of the activities carried
25 out using the grant funds;

1 “(B) a summary of the health outcomes
2 for sickle cell patients benefitting from the
3 transition coordination and management pro-
4 gram supported by the grant; and

5 “(C) the number of specialists trained and
6 fellowships funded under the grant, as de-
7 scribed in subsection (a)(2), as applicable.

8 “(e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—To
9 carry out this section, there is authorized to be appro-
10 priated \$70,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2023 through
11 2028.”.

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