



119TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

S. _____

To amend the Public Health Service Act to provide for the participation of physical therapists in the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment program, to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to expand Medicare Rural Health Clinic Services and Federally Qualified Health Center Services to include physical therapy services, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. HEINRICH (for himself and Mr. ROUNDS) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on

A BILL

To amend the Public Health Service Act to provide for the participation of physical therapists in the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment program, to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to expand Medicare Rural Health Clinic Services and Federally Qualified Health Center Services to include physical therapy services, 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,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Physical Therapist
3 Workforce and Patient Access Act of 2026”.

4 **SEC. 2. NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE CORPS; PARTICIPA-**
5 **TION OF PHYSICAL THERAPISTS IN LOAN RE-**
6 **PAYMENT PROGRAM.**

7 (a) MISSION OF CORPS; DEFINITION OF PRIMARY
8 HEALTH SERVICES.—Section 331(a)(3)(D) of the Public
9 Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 254d(a)(3)(D)) is amended
10 by striking “or mental health,” and inserting “mental
11 health, or physical therapy,”.

12 (b) PHYSICAL THERAPY HEALTH PROFESSIONAL
13 TARGET AREAS.—Section 332 of the Public Health Serv-
14 ice Act (42 U.S.C. 254e) is amended by adding at the
15 end the following:

16 “(1)(1) The Secretary, acting through the Adminis-
17 trator of the Health Resources and Services Administra-
18 tion, shall identify, based on the data collected under para-
19 graph (3), physical therapy health professional target
20 areas that satisfy the criteria described in paragraph (2)
21 for purposes of, in connection with receipt of assistance
22 under this title, assigning to such identified areas physical
23 therapy health professionals who, without application of
24 this subsection, would otherwise be eligible for such assist-
25 ance. The Secretary shall distribute physical therapy
26 health professionals within health professional shortage

1 areas using the physical therapy health professional target
2 areas so identified.

3 “(2) For purposes of paragraph (1), the Secretary
4 shall establish criteria for physical therapy health profes-
5 sional target areas that identify geographic areas within
6 health professional shortage areas that have a shortage
7 of physical therapy health professionals.

8 “(3) For purposes of this subsection, the Secretary
9 shall collect and publish in the Federal Register data com-
10 paring the availability and need of physical therapy health
11 services in health professional shortage areas and in areas
12 within such health professional shortage areas.

13 “(4) In carrying out paragraph (1), the Secretary
14 shall seek input from relevant provider organizations, in-
15 cluding medical societies, organizations representing med-
16 ical facilities, and other organizations with expertise in
17 physical therapy health services.

18 “(5) Nothing in this subsection shall be construed
19 as—

20 “(A) requiring the identification of a physical
21 therapy health professional target area in an area
22 not otherwise already designated as a health profes-
23 sional shortage area; or

24 “(B) affecting the types of health professionals,
25 without application of this subsection, otherwise eli-

1 gible for assistance, including a loan repayment or
2 scholarship, pursuant to the application of this sec-
3 tion.”.

4 (c) LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM.—Section 338B of
5 the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 2541–1) is
6 amended—

7 (1) in subsection (a)(1), by inserting “physical
8 therapists,” after “dentists,”; and

9 (2) in subsection (b)—

10 (A) in paragraph (1), by striking “, or be
11 certified as a nurse midwife, nurse practitioner,
12 or physician assistant” and inserting “; be cer-
13 tified as a nurse midwife, nurse practitioner, or
14 physician assistant; or have a doctoral or mas-
15 ter’s degree in physical therapy”;

16 (B) in paragraph (1)(B), by inserting
17 “physical therapy,” after “mental health,”; and

18 (C) in paragraph (1)(C)(ii), by inserting
19 “physical therapy,” after “dentistry,”.

20 **SEC. 3. ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR PARTICIPATION OF**
21 **PHYSICAL THERAPISTS IN THE NATIONAL**
22 **HEALTH SERVICE CORPS LOAN REPAYMENT**
23 **PROGRAM.**

24 Section 10503(b)(2)(L) of the Patient Protection and
25 Affordable Care Act (42 U.S.C. 254b–2(b)(2)(L)) is

1 amended by inserting before the period at the end the fol-
2 lowing: “, and an additional \$15,000,000 for such period
3 for loan repayments for physical therapists participating
4 in the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment
5 Program under section 338B of the Public Health Service
6 Act”.

7 **SEC. 4. EXPANDING MEDICARE RURAL HEALTH CLINIC**
8 **SERVICES AND FEDERALLY QUALIFIED**
9 **HEALTH CENTER SERVICES TO INCLUDE**
10 **PHYSICAL THERAPY SERVICES.**

11 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1861(aa) of the Social Se-
12 curity Act (42 U.S.C. 1395x(aa)) is amended—

13 (1) in paragraph (1)—

14 (A) in subparagraph (C), by striking at the
15 end “and”;

16 (B) in subparagraph (D), by adding “and”
17 at the end; and

18 (C) by inserting after subparagraph (D)
19 the following new subparagraph:

20 “(E) such physical therapy services (as defined
21 in subsection (p)) furnished by a physical thera-
22 pist,”; and

23 (2) in paragraph (3)(A), by striking “subpara-
24 graphs (A) through (D)” and inserting “subpara-
25 graphs (A) through (E)”.

1 (b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by
2 subsection (a) shall apply with respect to services fur-
3 nished on or after January 1, 2027.