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State of Minnesota HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

EIGHTY-FIFTH SESSION

HOUSE FILE No. 575

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The bill was read for the first time and referred to the Committee on Health and Human Services

1.1 A bill for an act
1.2 relating to human services; changing mental health provisions; authorizing a loan
1.3 forgiveness program; establishing grants for culturally competent mental health
1.4 services; appropriating money; amending Minnesota Statutes 2006, section
1.5 245.696, by adding a subdivision; proposing coding for new law in Minnesota
1.6 Statutes, chapter 245.

1.7 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

1.8 Section 1. Minnesota Statutes 2006, section 245.696, is amended by adding a
1.9 subdivision to read:

1.10 Subd. 3. Loan forgiveness program. (a) For the purposes of this subdivision,
1.11 "qualified educational loan" means a government, commercial, or foundation loan for
1.12 actual costs paid for tuition, reasonable education expenses, and reasonable living
1.13 expenses related to the graduate education of a mental health professional.

1.14 (b) (1) A loan forgiveness program account is established. The commissioner of
1.15 human services shall use money from the account to establish a loan forgiveness program
1.16 for individuals who are employed by a nonprofit agency that provides mental health
1.17 services for cultural or ethnic minority clients.

1.18 (2) Appropriations made to the account do not cancel and are available until
1.19 expended, except that at the end of the biennium, any remaining balance in the account
1.20 that is not committed by contract and is not needed to fulfill existing commitments shall
1.21 cancel to the fund.

1.22 (c) To be eligible to participate in the loan forgiveness program, an individual must
1.23 be employed by a nonprofit agency that provides mental health services for cultural or
1.24 ethnic minority clients and must be of the same culture or ethnicity as the clients. An
1.25 applicant selected to participate must sign a contract agreeing to remain employed with

2.1 the nonprofit agency for a three-year full-time term, which shall begin no later than 30
 2.2 days following completion of the required training.

2.3 (d) The commissioner of human services may select applicants each year for
 2.4 participation in the loan forgiveness program, within the limits of available funding.
 2.5 Applicants are responsible for securing their own qualified educational loans. The
 2.6 commissioner shall select participants based on their suitability for practice serving the
 2.7 required cultural or ethnic minority population. The commissioner shall give preference to
 2.8 applicants closest to completing their education.

2.9 (e) For each year that a participant meets the service obligation required under
 2.10 paragraph (c), the commissioner shall make annual disbursements directly to the
 2.11 participant equivalent to 25 percent of the participant's loan indebtedness, not to exceed
 2.12 the balance of the participant's qualifying educational loans. Before receiving loan
 2.13 repayment disbursements, and as requested, the participant and the employer must
 2.14 complete and return to the commissioner an affidavit of practice form provided by the
 2.15 commissioner verifying that the participant is practicing as required under paragraph (c).
 2.16 The participant must provide the commissioner with verification that the full amount of
 2.17 the loan repayment disbursement received by the participant has been applied toward
 2.18 the designated loans. After each disbursement, verification must be received by the
 2.19 commissioner and approved before the next loan repayment disbursement is made.

2.20 (f) If a participant does not fulfill the minimum commitment of service under
 2.21 paragraph (c), the commissioner of human services shall collect from the participant the
 2.22 full amount paid to the participant under the loan forgiveness program plus interest at
 2.23 the rate established under section 270C.40. The commissioner shall deposit the money
 2.24 collected in the general fund. The commissioner shall allow waivers of all or part of the
 2.25 money owed the commissioner as a result of nonfulfillment if emergency circumstances
 2.26 prevented fulfillment of the minimum service commitment.

2.27 **Sec. 2. [245.6961] CULTURALLY COMPETENT MENTAL HEALTH**
 2.28 **SERVICES.**

2.29 Subdivision 1. **Services; grants.** The commissioner is authorized to make grants
 2.30 to nonprofit organizations to ensure that culturally competent mental health services are
 2.31 provided to individuals throughout the state. The grants are intended to provide direct
 2.32 services and to serve as a bridge to existing mental health providers and organizations that
 2.33 reflect the community they serve. The grants may be used to:

2.34 (1) provide services and supports to low-income families from different cultures;

3.1 (2) provide technical assistance to mental health and health care providers who have
3.2 clients in need of culturally appropriate services;

3.3 (3) translate information for patients and their families;

3.4 (4) colocate services at clinics, schools, and other locations; and

3.5 (5) provide services and supports using telemedicine to reach families in need of
3.6 information and support in communities where there are no culturally specific providers.

3.7 Subd. 2. **Task force.** The commissioner shall appoint a task force to develop
3.8 criteria for eligibility, services, and outcome measurement. Meeting children's therapeutic
3.9 services and support standards cannot be one of the criteria for receiving funding through
3.10 this program.

3.11 **Sec. 3. APPROPRIATION.**

3.12 \$..... in fiscal year 2008 and \$..... in fiscal year 2009 are appropriated from the
3.13 general fund to the commissioner of human services for development and implementation
3.14 of grants for culturally competent mental health services under section 2.