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Washington State Awarded \$4 Million Grant to Support Health Professionals in High-Need Areas

The U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration has awarded a four-year, \$4 million grant to Washington State to repay the student loans of health professionals serving in high-need areas. The award represents a major increase in federal funding for the Federal-State Loan Repayment Program (FSLRP), for which Washington has received \$525,000 in previous years. Historically, the Legislature has matched this amount with state funds.

Administered by the Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC), FSLRP addresses critical health care access and delivery shortages across Washington State. The program encourages licensed health professionals to provide primary care at approved sites in rural or underserved urban areas. In exchange for two years of service at an eligible site, the program repays all or a portion of participants' outstanding educational loans.

The new grant funding will help meet increasing demand for the program, as well as expand eligibility to include behavioral health providers. Funds will also allow WSAC to examine the potential of funding providers, in a variety of primary care settings, who are addressing the opioid epidemic through creative collaborations.