

By: Thompson of Harris

H.B. No. 955

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to eligibility requirements for student loan repayment assistance for certain mental health professionals.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Section 61.603, Education Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 61.603. ELIGIBILITY. (a) Except as provided by Subsection (b), to ~~Te~~ be eligible to receive repayment assistance under this subchapter, a mental health professional must:

(1) apply to the board;

(2) have completed one, two, three, four, or five consecutive years of practice in a mental health professional shortage area designated by the Department of State Health Services; and

(3) providemental health services in this state to:

(A) recipients under the medical assistance program authorized by Chapter 32, Human Resources Code;

(B) enrollees under the child health plan program authorized by Chapter 62, Health and Safety Code; or

(C) persons committed to a secure correctional facility operated by or under contract with the Texas Juvenile Justice Department or persons confined in a secure correctional facility operated by or under contract with any division of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice.

1 (b) To be eligible to receive repayment assistance under
2 this subchapter, a mental health professional described by Section
3 61.601(1) who specializes in the diagnosis and treatment of
4 psychiatric and associated behavioral health issues affecting
5 children must:

6 (1) apply to the board;

7 (2) provide mental health services to children in this
8 state; and

9 (3) have completed one, two, three, four, or five
10 consecutive years of practice in this state as described by
11 Subdivision (2), including a practice that consists solely of the
12 remote diagnosis and treatment of children.

13 (c) In addition to satisfying the requirements under
14 Subsection (a) or (b), as applicable, for a licensed physician to be
15 eligible to receive repayment assistance under this subchapter
16 after the physician's third consecutive year of practice described
17 under Subsection (a)(2) or (b), as applicable, the physician must
18 be certified in psychiatry by:

19 (1) the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology; or

20 (2) the American Osteopathic Board of Neurology and
21 Psychiatry.

22 SECTION 2. The change in law made by this Act to Section
23 61.603, Education Code, applies only to a person who first
24 establishes eligibility for loan repayment assistance under
25 Subchapter K, Chapter 61, Education Code, as amended by this Act, on
26 the basis of an application submitted on or after September 1, 2019.

27 A person who first establishes eligibility on the basis of an

1 application submitted before September 1, 2019, is governed by the
2 law in effect on the date the application was submitted, and the
3 former law is continued in effect for that purpose.

4 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect September 1, 2019.