By:  West, et al. S.B. No. 532

(Kuempel, González of El Paso, Anchía)

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to repayment of certain mental health professional education loans.

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 [~~To~~] be eligible to receive repayment assistance under this subchapter, a mental health professional must:

(1)  apply to the board;

(2)  have completed one, two, or 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)  provide mental 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.

(b)  A mental health professional may also establish eligibility for the repayment assistance under this subchapter by satisfying the requirements of this subsection. To establish eligibility under this subsection, the mental health professional must:

(1)  apply to the board;

(2)  provide mental health services to:

(A)  patients in a state hospital, as defined by Section 552.0011, Health and Safety Code; or

(B)  individuals receiving community-based mental health services from a local mental health authority that provides the services in accordance with Subchapter B, Chapter 534, Health and Safety Code; and

(3)  have completed one, two, or three consecutive years of practice in this state as described by Subdivision (2). [~~In addition to satisfying the requirements under Subsection (a), for a licensed physician to be eligible to receive repayment assistance under this subchapter after the physician's third consecutive year of practice described under Subsection (a)(2), the physician must be certified in psychiatry by:~~

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

[~~(2)  the American Osteopathic Board of Neurology and Psychiatry.~~]

SECTION 2.  Section 61.604(a), Education Code, is amended to read as follows:

(a)  A mental health professional may receive repayment assistance under this subchapter for not more than three [~~five~~] years.

SECTION 3.  Section 61.607(a), Education Code, is amended to read as follows:

(a)  A mental health professional may receive repayment assistance under this subchapter for each year the mental health professional establishes eligibility for the assistance in an amount determined by applying the following applicable percentage to the maximum total amount of assistance allowed for the mental health professional under Subsection (b):

(1)  for the first year, 33.33 [~~10~~] percent;

(2)  for the second year, 33.33 [~~15~~] percent; and

(3)  for the third year, 33.33 [~~20~~] percent[~~;~~

[~~(4)  for the fourth year, 25 percent; and~~

[~~(5)  for the fifth year, 30 percent~~].

SECTION 4.  Section 61.608, Education Code, is amended by adding Subsection (e) to read as follows:

(e)  The board shall administer the program under this subchapter in a manner that, as program openings occur, allows for the continuous:

(1)  approval or disapproval of applications;

(2)  determination of applicant eligibility; and

(3)  acceptance of eligible applicants into the program.

SECTION 5.  The changes in law made by this Act to Sections 61.603, 61.604(a), and 61.607(a), Education Code, apply only to a person who first establishes eligibility for loan repayment assistance under Subchapter K, Chapter 61, Education Code, as amended by this Act, on the basis of an application submitted on or after September 1, 2023. A person who first establishes eligibility on the basis of an application submitted before September 1, 2023, is governed by the law in effect at the time the application was submitted, and the former law is continued in effect for that purpose.

SECTION 6.  This Act takes effect September 1, 2023.