

Maryland Loan Assistance Repayment Program (MLARP) for Physicians and Physician Assistants Workgroup

Virtual Meeting

January 8, 2021, 10:00 a.m.

Minutes

Workgroup Members

Karin DiBari, Erin Dorrien, Matthew Dudzic, Cheryl Duncan De Pinto, Damean Freas, Stacey Little, Donna Parker, Gene Ransom, Richard Rohrs, Roy Ziegelstein

Maryland Department of Health (MDH) Staff Present

Sara Seitz, Sadé Diggs

Also in Attendance

Shadae Paul, Maryland Health Care Commission; Hannah Friedman-Bell, Maryland Health Services Cost Review Commission; Jane Krienke, Maryland Hospital Association; June Chung, Appropriates Committee Counsel; Jennifer Witten, Maryland Hospital Association; Karin Weaver, MedStar Good Samaritan Hospital; Kelly Kyser, MedStar Health; Kelly Schutz, MedStar Emergency Physicians; Megan Renfrew, Maryland Health Services Cost Review Commission; Susan Lawrence, University of Maryland Baltimore; Tracey DeShields, Maryland Health Care Commission; Tyler Babic, Department of Legislative Services

Notes

I. **Meeting Opening and Welcome/ Roll Call:** The virtual meeting was called to order (10:02 a.m.) by Cheryl Duncan De Pinto who offered a brief welcome. Sara Seitz provided roll call and requested guests sign in to the virtual meeting via the chat function.

II. Opening Business/ Remarks

- **Minutes Approval:** The minutes of the most recent meeting, October 28, 2020 were distributed prior to the meeting and reviewed by attendees. No corrections were recommended. Minutes were approved as distributed.
- **MLARP Operational Updates:** Sara Seitz provided a status update regarding the transition of the program's administration fully to Maryland Department of Health (MDH) and current operations. Details regarding the final transitional task of a funds transfer from the Maryland Higher Education Commission to MDH, the 2020 application cycle, and current duties were addressed and shared via PowerPoint presentation.
- **Interim Report to the General Assembly:** A brief review of the timeline associated with the report's development and submission were noted. The priorities discussed and entered into the Interim Report by the Workgroup were reviewed in order to set the stage for future conversations of the group.

III. Priority Presentations and Discussion

- A. Matthew Dudzic, Board of Physicians, presented regarding common characteristics of successful State Loan Repayment Programs across the country. Key findings include:
- Flexibility was a key component of success.
 - Successful programs have State legislation that provide programs with the ability to adapt.
 - A broad array of funding sources provides a robust financial base, and allows programs to continue assisting rural and underserved communities, even when State budgets fluctuate.
- B. Erin Dorrien, Maryland Hospital Association, presented data related to provider recruitment and retention resulting from loan repayment efforts and the funding match sources and non-fiscal characteristics of successful programs.
- C. Sadé Diggs, Office of Workforce Development, MDH, presented on current flexibilities available in use of State Loan Repayment Program Federal funds, such as part-time eligibility (for those who practice ≥ 20 -39 hours per week versus ≥ 40 hours per week) and expanded discipline eligibility (beyond physician assistants and physicians).
- D. Discussion: Major topics areas discussed include:
1. State programs tend to not have only one funding source (state/federal funds) for loan repayment programs. Group should learn more about experiences and operational facets of non-State and non-Federal funding sources in other states.
 2. Robust data related to physician and mid-level practitioners (e.g. nurse practitioners, physician assistants) is necessary to inform workforce policy. Questions include: What is the current supply of providers practicing at any level in Maryland, where are they practicing, and in what disciplines?
 3. Discipline expansion could be of benefit to keep healthcare professional students in-state and engaged in available Maryland university/training pathways. Expansion/ priority disciplines should include mental health/addictions and pediatrics. Specialty shortages, such as those in endocrinology, also need attention.
- E. Next Steps
1. Recommended reading (Saved in Google Drive for Workgroup members):
 - a. Donald Pathman, et al. (2012). States' Experience with Loan Repayment Programs for Health Care Professionals in a Time of State Budget Cuts and NHSC Expansion. *The Journal of Rural Health*, 28 (2012), 408–415.
 - b. National Governor's Association (2020). [Informing Health Care Workforce Policy by Leveraging Data: A Toolkit for States](#).

2. Matthew Dudzic and Erin Dorien will determine which states represent a variety of program funding sources so that the group can reach out to learn about the operations of those programs.
 3. All: Explore knowledge of other Maryland loan repayment programs such as Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program.
- F. **Open Discussion with Public Comment:** No guests provided comment during the time dedicated for this purpose.
- G. **Adjournment:** (11:38 a.m.) Motion: Cheryl Duncan De Pinto
Second: Gene Ransom