


MEMORANDUM

DATE	May 4, 2017
TO	Policy and Advocacy Committee
FROM	 Konnor Leitzell Central Services Student Assistant
SUBJECT	Agenda Item #6(b)(3) – AB 1188 (Nazarian) Health Professionals Development: Loan Repayment

Background:

This bill would increase the biennial fee collected at the time of renewal from specified Board of Psychology (Board) and Board of Behavioral Sciences (BBS) licensees from \$10.00 to \$20.00, which would be deposited in the Mental Health Practitioner Education Fund. This bill would also allow licensed professional clinical counselors and professional clinical counselor interns to be eligible for grants to reimburse education loans, and add a fee of \$20.00 at the time of renewal for Licensed Professional Clinical Counselors and interns, which would be deposited in the Mental Health Practitioner Education Fund.

This bill would increase the amount of Mental Health Practitioner Education Fund grants available to Board licensees and would help increase access to mental health services in underserved and vulnerable communities in California.

At its April 21 Board Meeting, the Board took a Support position on AB 1188. Since that time, Board staff has worked on preparing support letters for the upcoming committee hearings. Board staff will keep the Committee apprised of advocacy letters and updates on the bill's progress in the coming months.

Location: Assembly Committee on Appropriations

Status: 4/26/2017 In committee: Set first hearing, referred to Assembly Committee on Appropriations Suspense File.

Votes: 4/18/2017 Assembly Committee on Health (14-0-1)
 4/04/2017 Assembly Committee on Business and Professions (14-0-2)

Action Requested:

This item is for informational purposes only. No action is requested at this time.

Attachment A: AB 1188 (Nazarian) Staff Analysis
 Attachment B: AB 1188 (Nazarian) Text

2017 Bill Analysis

Author: Nazarian	Bill Number: AB 1188	Related Bills: Not Applicable
Sponsor: California Association of Licensed Professional Clinical Counselors	Version: Amended 04/05/2017	
Subject: Health Professions Development: Loan Repayment		

SUMMARY

The bill would increase the biennial fee collected at the time of renewal from specified Board of Psychology (Board) and Board of Behavioral Sciences (BBS) licensees from \$10.00 to \$20.00, which would be deposited in the Mental Health Practitioner Education Fund. This bill would also allow Licensed Professional Clinical Counselors and interns to be eligible for grants to reimburse education loans, and add a fee of \$20.00 at the time of renewal for Licensed Professional Clinical Counselors and interns, which would be deposited in the Mental Health Practitioner Education Fund.

RECOMMENDATION

SUPPORT – This bill, if passed, would help increase access to mental health care for underserved communities by providing larger incentives to licensees who are working with these vulnerable populations.

REASON FOR THE BILL

The intent of this bill is to allow Licensed Professional Clinical Counselors and professional clinical counselor interns to be eligible for the Licensed Mental Health Service Provider Education Program to aid in the repayment of loans taken during their educational track. Similar to Marriage and Family Therapists, Licensed Clinical Social Workers, and licensed psychologists, LPCCs have the ability to provide services during a time where the state is experiencing a critical shortage in mental health care providers. The benefit of expanding the loan repayment program to LPCCs is two-fold: 1) LPCCs may find some financial alleviation in the repayment of loans; and, 2) traditionally underserved populations will now have a greater number of licensed mental health professionals providing services in their area.

Other Boards/Departments that may be affected: Board of Behavioral Science	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Change in Fee(s) <input type="checkbox"/> Affects Licensing Processes <input type="checkbox"/> Affects Enforcement Processes	
<input type="checkbox"/> Urgency Clause <input type="checkbox"/> Regulations Required <input type="checkbox"/> Legislative Reporting <input type="checkbox"/> New Appointment Required	
Policy & Advocacy Committee Position: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Support <input type="checkbox"/> Support if Amended <input type="checkbox"/> Oppose <input type="checkbox"/> Oppose Unless Amended <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Watch Date: <u>March 13, 2017</u> Vote: <u>2 Aye, 0 No; Pass</u>	Full Board Position: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Support <input type="checkbox"/> Support if Amended <input type="checkbox"/> Oppose <input type="checkbox"/> Oppose Unless Amended <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Watch Date: <u>April 21, 2017</u> Vote: <u>6 Aye, 0 No; Pass</u>

ANALYSIS

Under current law, the Mental Health Practitioner Education Fund provides grants to eligible licensed mental health service providers who are employed at a publicly funded, or a public or nonprofit private mental health facility that contracts with county mental health entities to provide mental health services, and who provide direct patient care in a publicly funded facility or a mental health professional shortage area. A “Licensed mental health service provider” refers to Board licensees (psychologists, registered psychologists, postdoctoral psychological assistants), postdoctoral psychology trainees employed in an exempt setting or employed pursuant to a California Department of Public Health or Department of Health Care Services waivers, marriage and family therapists, marriage and family therapist interns, licensed clinical social workers, and associate clinical social workers.

In addition to the biennial renewal of license fees collected by both the Board and BBS, an additional fee is collected from licensees in order to help fund The Mental Health Practitioner Education Fund. Under current law, this fee is set at \$10.00 for each renewal. Currently, these funds are collected and distributed separately by the Board and BBS during the renewal process and then sent separately to the Mental Health Practitioner Education Fund. This bill, if passed, would increase that fee to \$20.00 for each renewal for the specified licensees of the Board and BBS and continue to maintain each fund separately.

This bill would require that Licensed Professional Clinical Counselors and interns be added to the definition of “licensed mental health professionals”, allowing them to be eligible for grants under this program for reimbursing educational loans related to a career as a licensed mental health service provider. This bill would require BBS to collect an additional \$20.00 fee at the time of renewal of a license for a professional clinical counselor and intern, which would be deposited in the Mental Health Practitioner Education Fund.

This bill is intended to help increase access to mental health care for underserved communities by providing larger incentives to licensees who are working with these vulnerable populations. This bill would allow an additional licensee population to be eligible for grants in order to reimburse educational loans accrued for the purpose of becoming a licensed mental health provider. By increasing the fees deposited to the Mental Health Practitioner Fund, more grants will be awarded, which will result in more providers serving vulnerable populations in underserved communities in California.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

SB 1204 (Hernandez, 2016) would have increased the fees for the Mental Health Practitioner Education Fund to \$20 for specified licensees of the Board and BBS. SB 1204 also included the Licensed Professional Clinical Counselors and interns to the eligibility list for grants. Originally, this bill would have also included licensed physicians

and osteopathic physicians licensed by the Medical Board of California. SB 1204 was pulled by the author and did not meet the deadlines for the legislative year.

OTHER STATES' INFORMATION

Not Applicable

PROGRAM BACKGROUND

The Board advances quality psychological services for Californians by ensuring ethical and legal practice and supporting the evolution of the practice. To accomplish this, the Board regulates licensed psychologists, psychological assistants, and registered psychologists.

Implementation of this bill would require changes to fee amounts in the BreEZe system; staff would also need to update renewal forms to reflect the new fee amount.

FISCAL IMPACT

In order to implement this bill, Board staff would need to make changes to BreEZe fee amounts and update renewal forms, the cost of which would be minor and absorbable for the Board.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

This bill would increase the amount of funds available for loan repayment and therefore assist licensees reduce loan debt.

LEGAL IMPACT

Not Applicable

APPOINTMENTS

Not Applicable

SUPPORT/OPPOSITION

Support: California Association of Licensed Professional Clinical Counselors (sponsor); American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, California Division; California Psychological Association; Mental Health America of Los Angeles; National Association of Social Workers-California Chapter

Opposition: None on file

ARGUMENTS**Proponents:**

- The California Association of Licensed Professional Clinical Counselors writes in support, "On behalf of the California Association for Licensed Professional

Clinical Counselors (CALPCC), I am writing in Support of AB 1188 (Nazarian). CALPCC is a Sponsor of this bill which seeks to increase access to mental health care in underserved areas by increasing the funding available for loan reimbursement for mental health professionals to serve in designated underserved areas of the State." The California Psychological Association writes in support, "CPA supports this legislation as it will double the amount of funds available for psychologists who commit to work in an underserved area. California and the rest of the nation suffer from shortages of mental health providers. The maldistribution of existing providers compounds the issue particularly for federally designated medical underserved areas. Recent studies show the U.S. mental health provider shortage is also made worse by the aging of the psychiatry specialty. Shortages in psychiatry may be considered even more acute than they are in primary care."

- The American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, California Division writes in support, the,[AAMFT-CA] has taken a position of Support on your Assembly Bill 1188, which would increase from \$10 to \$20 the amount each licensed MFT contributes to the Mental Health Practitioner Education Fund as a part of license renewal. It also would add professional clinical counselors to the program."
- Mental Health American of Los Angeles writes in support "On behalf of Mental Health American of Los Angeles I am writing in support of [this bill], which seeks to increase access to mental health care in underserved areas by increasing the funding available for loan reimbursement for mental health professionals to serve in designated underserved areas of the State."
- The National Association of Social Workers-California Chapter writes in support, "The National Association of Social Workers, California Chapter (NASW-CA) is a co-sponsor of AB 1188 (Nazarian), which would help alleviate the shortage of mental health providers working in medically underserved areas by shoring up the current Licensed Mental Health Services Provider Education Program (LMHSPEP)."

Opponents: Not Applicable

(d) The Health Professions Education Foundation shall make recommendations to the director of the office concerning all of the following:

(1) A standard contractual agreement to be signed by the director and any licensed mental health service provider who is serving in a publicly funded facility or a mental health professional shortage area that would require the licensed mental health service provider who receives a grant under the program to work in the publicly funded facility or a mental health professional shortage area for at least one year.

(2) The maximum allowable total grant amount per individual licensed mental health service provider.

(3) The maximum allowable annual grant amount per individual licensed mental health service provider.

(e) The Health Professions Education Foundation shall develop the program, which shall comply with all of the following requirements:

(1) The total amount of grants under the program per individual licensed mental health service provider shall not exceed the amount of educational loans related to a career as a licensed mental health service provider incurred by that provider.

(2) The program shall keep the fees from the different licensed providers separate to ensure that all grants are funded by those fees collected from the corresponding licensed provider groups.

(3) A loan forgiveness grant may be provided in installments proportionate to the amount of the service obligation that has been completed.

(4) The number of persons who may be considered for the program shall be limited by the funds made available pursuant to Section 128458.

SEC. 6. This act is an urgency statute necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety within the meaning of Article IV of the California Constitution and shall go into immediate effect. The facts constituting the necessity are:

In order to address the urgent need for licensed mental health practitioners in medically underserved areas, it is necessary that this act take effect immediately.