

Second Regular Session
Seventy-third General Assembly
STATE OF COLORADO

INTRODUCED

LLS NO. 22-0909.02 Conrad Imel x2313

SENATE BILL 22-172

SENATE SPONSORSHIP

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Senate Committees
Health & Human Services

House Committees

A BILL FOR AN ACT

101 CONCERNING AN INITIATIVE TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF
102 HEALTH-CARE PROFESSIONALS PRACTICING IN COLORADO'S
103 RURAL AREAS.

Bill Summary

(Note: This summary applies to this bill as introduced and does not reflect any amendments that may be subsequently adopted. If this bill passes third reading in the house of introduction, a bill summary that applies to the reengrossed version of this bill will be available at <http://leg.colorado.gov>.)

The bill establishes the Colorado rural health-care workforce initiative (initiative) to expand the number of health-care professionals practicing in Colorado's rural or frontier counties. As part of the initiative, an institution of higher education (institution) is authorized to establish and operate a health-care professionals rural track within any health-care

Shading denotes HOUSE amendment. Double underlining denotes SENATE amendment.
Capital letters or bold & italic numbers indicate new material to be added to existing statute.
Dashes through the words indicate deletions from existing statute.

professional education program offered by the institution.

A rural track must set aside seats in its health-care professional education program for students who express an interest in studying and working in a rural or frontier county, offer didactic curriculum related to practicing the health-care discipline in rural or frontier counties, place students in rural or frontier counties for hands-on instruction and training, and award scholarships to students in the rural track. In order to receive a scholarship, a student must commit to working as a health-care professional in a rural or frontier county for 2 years after completing education and training.

The rural office at the university of Colorado's school of medicine (rural program office) provides technical assistance to the institutions operating a rural track regarding recruiting and admitting students committed to working in rural areas and identifying rural or frontier counties in which students may be placed for clinical training. The rural program office also facilitates, arranges, or advises an institution about arranging housing for students placed in a rural or frontier county. The rural program office must provide, without charge, to institutions operating a rural track, didactic curriculum related to practicing in rural or frontier counties. The bill requires the rural program office to annually evaluate the effectiveness of the initiative and report to the general assembly's education committees about the initiative.

The bill requires the general assembly to annually appropriate \$150,000 to the rural program office to support institutions that operate a rural track. For state fiscal year 2022-23, the general assembly is required to appropriate up to \$400,000 to certain institutions to establish or expand rural tracks in 12 programs specified in the bill.

1 *Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Colorado:*

2 **SECTION 1. Legislative declaration.** (1) The general assembly
3 finds and declares that:

4 (a) Nearly three-quarters of Colorado's sixty-four counties are
5 designated as rural or frontier counties by the state office of rural health;

6 (b) Rural and frontier counties have difficulty recruiting and
7 retaining health-care workers;

8 (c) The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic that decimated the
9 health-care workforce across Colorado hit rural areas especially hard, and
10 the associated burnout is causing health-care workers to leave medicine

1 and nursing;

2 (d) The university of Colorado (CU) school of medicine's rural
3 office at the Anschutz medical campus provides a model program for
4 educating health-care professionals that wish to live and work in rural
5 areas. Other institutions that educate health-care professionals can take
6 advantage of the expertise, experience, and infrastructure in place at the
7 CU school of medicine's rural office in order to prepare their health-care
8 students to work in rural or frontier counties.

9 (e) Establishing and funding a limited number of health-care
10 professional rural track programs allows the general assembly to collect
11 data and information on best practices for providing
12 rural-practice-focused education to health-care professionals; and

13 (f) The general assembly can use the lessons learned to later
14 expand the new Colorado rural health-care workforce initiative to other
15 institutions and practice areas to increase the number of health-care
16 professionals practicing in Colorado's rural and frontier counties.

17 **SECTION 2.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, **add** article 76.5 to
18 title 23 as follows:

19 **ARTICLE 76.5**

20 **Colorado Rural Health-care Workforce Initiative**

21 **23-76.5-101. Definitions.** AS USED IN THIS ARTICLE 76.5, UNLESS
22 THE CONTEXT OTHERWISE REQUIRES:

23 (1) "HEALTH-CARE PROFESSIONAL" MEANS A PHYSICIAN,
24 PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT, PHYSICAL THERAPIST, NURSE, INCLUDING NURSE
25 PRACTITIONER, PHARMACIST, DENTIST, PROFESSIONAL COUNSELOR,
26 PSYCHOLOGIST, SOCIAL WORKER, OR MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPIST
27 WHO IS REGISTERED, CERTIFIED, OR LICENSED PURSUANT TO TITLE 12 AND

1 WHO IS SUBJECT TO CREDENTIALING. "HEALTH-CARE PROFESSIONAL" ALSO
2 INCLUDES A PUBLIC HEALTH PROFESSIONAL WHO IS NOT REQUIRED TO BE
3 REGISTERED, CERTIFIED, OR LICENSED PURSUANT TO STATE LAW.

4 (2) "HEALTH-CARE PROFESSIONALS RURAL TRACK" OR "RURAL
5 TRACK" MEANS A HEALTH-CARE PROFESSIONALS RURAL TRACK
6 ESTABLISHED BY AN INSTITUTION PURSUANT TO SECTION 23-76.5-102.

7 (3) "INITIATIVE" MEANS THE COLORADO RURAL HEALTH-CARE
8 WORKFORCE INITIATIVE ESTABLISHED IN THIS ARTICLE 76.5.

9 (4) "INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION" OR "INSTITUTION"
10 MEANS STATE INSTITUTIONS AS DEFINED IN SECTION 23-18-102 (10)(a),
11 LOCAL DISTRICT COLLEGES, AND AREA TECHNICAL COLLEGES.

12 (5) "PRECEPTOR" MEANS A HEALTH-CARE PROFESSIONAL WHO IS
13 REGISTERED, CERTIFIED, OR LICENSED, AS APPROPRIATE, PURSUANT TO
14 TITLE 12 WHO ASSUMES THE RESPONSIBILITY OF TEACHING, SUPERVISING,
15 AND EVALUATING A STUDENT SEEKING A DEGREE IN A HEALTH-CARE
16 PROFESSION DISCIPLINE AS PART OF THE STUDENT'S CLINICAL TRAINING
17 AND EDUCATION IN A RURAL OR FRONTIER COUNTY.

18 (6) "RURAL OR FRONTIER COUNTY" MEANS A COUNTY IN
19 COLORADO DESIGNATED BY THE STATE OFFICE OF RURAL HEALTH, KNOWN
20 AS THE COLORADO RURAL HEALTH CENTER, AS A RURAL OR FRONTIER
21 COUNTY.

22 (7) "RURAL PROGRAM OFFICE" MEANS THE OFFICE THAT
23 ADMINISTERS THE UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO'S SCHOOL OF MEDICINE'S
24 RURAL PROGRAM AT THE HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER CAMPUS.

25 **23-76.5-102. Colorado rural health-care workforce initiative**
26 **- institution health-care professionals rural tracks.** (1) THERE IS
27 ESTABLISHED THE COLORADO RURAL HEALTH-CARE WORKFORCE

1 INITIATIVE TO EXPAND THE NUMBER OF HEALTH-CARE PROFESSIONALS
2 PRACTICING IN COLORADO'S RURAL OR FRONTIER COUNTIES.

3 (2) AS PART OF THE INITIATIVE, AN INSTITUTION OF HIGHER
4 EDUCATION MAY ESTABLISH A HEALTH-CARE PROFESSIONALS RURAL
5 TRACK, OR EXPAND AN EXISTING RURAL TRACK, THAT MEETS THE CRITERIA
6 DESCRIBED IN SUBSECTION (3) OF THIS SECTION, WITHIN ANY SPECIFIED
7 HEALTH-CARE PROFESSIONAL CREDENTIAL OR DEGREE PROGRAM OFFERED
8 AT THE INSTITUTION. ON OR BEFORE AUGUST 1 OF EACH FISCAL YEAR IN
9 WHICH AN INSTITUTION RECEIVES FUNDING FOR A RURAL TRACK, THE
10 INSTITUTION SHALL SUBMIT TO THE RURAL PROGRAM OFFICE A WRITTEN
11 PLAN DESCRIBING HOW THE INSTITUTION INTENDS TO USE THE FUNDING TO
12 MEET THE REQUIREMENTS FOR A RURAL TRACK DESCRIBED IN SUBSECTION
13 (3) OF THIS SECTION.

14 (3) SUBJECT TO AVAILABLE APPROPRIATIONS, IN OPERATING A
15 RURAL TRACK, AN INSTITUTION SHALL:

16 (a) CONDUCT AN OUTREACH CAMPAIGN TO PROMOTE KNOWLEDGE
17 OF AND INTEREST IN RURAL HEALTH-CARE CAREERS, INFORM STUDENTS
18 AND PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS OF THE INITIATIVE, AND IDENTIFY POTENTIAL
19 STUDENT APPLICANTS;

20 (b) PRIORITIZE ADMISSION TO THE INSTITUTION AND SET ASIDE
21 SEATS IN ITS HEALTH-CARE PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAM FOR
22 STUDENTS IN THE RURAL TRACK;

23 (c) AWARD SCHOLARSHIPS TO STUDENTS IN THE RURAL TRACK, AS
24 DESCRIBED IN SUBSECTION (6) OF THIS SECTION;

25 (d) OFFER DIDACTIC CURRICULUM THAT THE RURAL PROGRAM
26 OFFICE DEVELOPS IN COLLABORATION WITH OTHER INSTITUTIONS THAT
27 OPERATE A RURAL TRACK RELATED TO PRACTICING THE HEALTH-CARE

1 DISCIPLINE IN RURAL OR FRONTIER COUNTIES TO STUDENTS IN THE RURAL
2 TRACK;

3 (e) IDENTIFY RURAL OR FRONTIER COUNTIES IN WHICH STUDENTS
4 MAY ACCOMPLISH THEIR CLINICAL TRAINING AND ESTABLISH
5 RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN STUDENTS AND HEALTH-CARE PROFESSIONALS
6 IN RURAL OR FRONTIER COUNTIES WHO CAN SERVE AS PRECEPTORS;

7 (f) PROVIDE INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT AND ADMINISTRATIVE
8 RESOURCES FOR PRECEPTORS; AND

9 (g) PLACE STUDENTS FOR A SIGNIFICANT DURATION IN RURAL OR
10 FRONTIER COUNTIES FOR CLINICAL INSTRUCTION AND TRAINING OF
11 SIGNIFICANT DEPTH FROM A PRECEPTOR, WHICH PLACEMENT MAY BE IN
12 COLLABORATION WITH THE RURAL PROGRAM OFFICE AND OTHER
13 PARTICIPATING PROGRAMS IN THE INITIATIVE.

14 (4) AN INSTITUTION THAT RECEIVES FUNDING FOR A RURAL TRACK
15 SHALL REPORT TO THE RURAL PROGRAM OFFICE INFORMATION ABOUT THE
16 RURAL TRACK REQUESTED BY THE RURAL PROGRAM OFFICE FOR THE
17 PURPOSE OF PREPARING THE REPORT DESCRIBED IN SECTION 23-76.5-104.

18 (5) AN INSTITUTION MAY USE THE MONEY APPROPRIATED FOR ITS
19 RURAL TRACK PURSUANT TO SECTION 23-76.5-105 FOR THE FOLLOWING:

20 (a) TOTAL OR PARTIAL COMPENSATION FOR ONE OR MORE FACULTY
21 OR STAFF TO DEVELOP THE RURAL TRACK AND TO OPERATE THE RURAL
22 TRACK IN A MANNER THAT MEETS THE REQUIREMENTS LISTED IN
23 SUBSECTION (3) OF THIS SECTION;

24 (b) THE COST OF HOUSING FOR STUDENTS FOR ALL OR PART OF THE
25 DURATION OF THE STUDENTS' CLINICAL INSTRUCTION AND TRAINING IN A
26 RURAL OR FRONTIER COUNTY;

27 (c) TRAINING PRECEPTORS WHO PRACTICE IN RURAL OR FRONTIER

1 COUNTIES TO PROVIDE PERSONALIZED CLINICAL INSTRUCTION OR TRAINING
2 TO RURAL TRACK STUDENTS; AND

3 (d) PROVIDING SCHOLARSHIPS TO STUDENTS IN THE RURAL TRACK,
4 AS DESCRIBED IN SUBSECTION (6) OF THIS SECTION.

5 (6) (a) AN INSTITUTION THAT OPERATES A RURAL TRACK SHALL
6 AWARD SCHOLARSHIPS TO STUDENTS PARTICIPATING IN THE RURAL TRACK
7 WHO COMMIT IN WRITING TO LIVING AND WORKING AS A HEALTH-CARE
8 PROFESSIONAL IN A RURAL OR FRONTIER COUNTY FOR TWO YEARS AFTER
9 COMPLETING EDUCATION AND TRAINING. AN INSTITUTION SHALL USE
10 FORTY PERCENT OF THE FUNDING RECEIVED FOR THE RURAL TRACK TO
11 AWARD SCHOLARSHIPS. THE INSTITUTION MAY DETERMINE THE AMOUNT
12 OF EACH SCHOLARSHIP BASED ON THE SCHOLARSHIP APPLICANT'S
13 DEMONSTRATED FINANCIAL NEED AND DEMONSTRATED COMMITMENT TO
14 WORKING AS A HEALTH-CARE PROFESSIONAL IN A RURAL OR FRONTIER
15 COUNTY.

16 (b) A STUDENT WHO FAILS TO FULFILL THE COMMITMENT TO WORK
17 IN A RURAL OR FRONTIER COUNTY AFTER ACCEPTING A SCHOLARSHIP
18 SHALL REMIT THE FULL AMOUNT OF THE SCHOLARSHIP TO THE INSTITUTION
19 THAT AWARDED THE SCHOLARSHIP. EACH INSTITUTION THAT OPERATES A
20 RURAL TRACK IS RESPONSIBLE FOR DEVELOPING A PROCESS FOR
21 DETERMINING WHETHER A STUDENT FULFILLS THE COMMITMENT AND FOR
22 RECOVERING SCHOLARSHIP MONEY WHEN NECESSARY. AN INSTITUTION
23 THAT RECOVERS SCHOLARSHIP MONEY PURSUANT TO THIS SUBSECTION
24 (6)(b) SHALL USE THE MONEY FOR ANY PERMISSIBLE USE DESCRIBED IN
25 SUBSECTION (3) OF THIS SECTION.

26 (c) RECEIVING A SCHOLARSHIP DESCRIBED IN THIS SUBSECTION (6)
27 DOES NOT AFFECT THE STUDENTS' ELIGIBILITY FOR THE COLORADO

1 HEALTH SERVICE CORPS DESCRIBED IN PART 5 OF ARTICLE 1.5 OF TITLE 25.

2 **23-76.5-103. Initiative administrative and education support**
3 **- university of Colorado school of medicine rural program. (1) THE**

4 RURAL PROGRAM OFFICE SHALL PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO THE
5 INSTITUTIONS ESTABLISHING AND OPERATING A RURAL TRACK. THE RURAL
6 PROGRAM OFFICE SHALL:

7 (a) PROVIDE GUIDANCE TO AN INSTITUTION REGARDING
8 RECRUITING AND ADMITTING STUDENTS COMMITTED TO WORKING IN
9 RURAL AREAS;

10 (b) ASSIST AN INSTITUTION WITH IDENTIFYING RURAL OR FRONTIER
11 COUNTIES IN WHICH STUDENTS MAY ACCOMPLISH THEIR CLINICAL
12 TRAINING AND ESTABLISHING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN STUDENTS AND
13 HEALTH-CARE PROFESSIONALS IN RURAL OR FRONTIER COUNTIES WHO CAN
14 SERVE AS PRECEPTORS;

15 (c) FACILITATE, ARRANGE, OR ADVISE AN INSTITUTION ABOUT
16 ARRANGING HOUSING FOR STUDENTS RECEIVING CLINICAL INSTRUCTION
17 AND TRAINING IN A RURAL OR FRONTIER COUNTY;

18 (d) DEVELOP, IN COLLABORATION WITH INSTITUTIONS THAT
19 OPERATE A RURAL TRACK, DIDACTIC CURRICULUM RELATED TO
20 PRACTICING IN RURAL OR FRONTIER COUNTIES AND PROVIDE THE
21 CURRICULUM WITHOUT CHARGE TO EACH INSTITUTION THAT OPERATES A
22 RURAL TRACK; AND

23 (e) PROVIDE ANY OTHER TECHNICAL OR ADMINISTRATIVE
24 ASSISTANCE THAT MAY BENEFIT AN INSTITUTION THAT IS ESTABLISHING OR
25 OPERATING A RURAL TRACK.

26 (2) (a) THE RURAL PROGRAM OFFICE SHALL DEVELOP METRICS TO
27 EVALUATE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE INITIATIVE AND RURAL TRACKS,

1 ANNUALLY EVALUATE THE INITIATIVE AND RURAL TRACKS, AND CREATE
2 THE REPORT DESCRIBED IN SECTION 23-76.5-104.

3 (b) THE RURAL PROGRAM OFFICE MAY COLLABORATE WITH THE
4 REGIONAL AREA HEALTH EDUCATION CENTERS AND THE COLORADO RURAL
5 HEALTH CENTER TO ASSESS RURAL COMMUNITY HEALTH-CARE PRIORITY
6 NEEDS IN ORDER TO INFORM DECISIONS ABOUT RURAL TRACK FUNDING,
7 AND MAY INCLUDE ANY RELEVANT FINDINGS AND INFORMATION IN THE
8 REPORT.

9 **23-76.5-104. Initiative reporting.** (1) ON OR BEFORE NOVEMBER
10 1, 2023, AND ON OR BEFORE NOVEMBER 1 EACH YEAR THEREAFTER, THE
11 RURAL PROGRAM OFFICE SHALL SUBMIT A REPORT TO THE HOUSE OF
12 REPRESENTATIVES EDUCATION COMMITTEE AND THE SENATE EDUCATION
13 COMMITTEE, OR THEIR SUCCESSOR COMMITTEES, CONCERNING THE
14 INITIATIVE. THE REPORT MUST INCLUDE:

15 (a) INFORMATION ABOUT EACH INSTITUTION'S HEALTH-CARE
16 PROFESSIONALS RURAL TRACKS, THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN
17 EACH RURAL TRACK, THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS WHO HAVE COMPLETED
18 EACH RURAL TRACK AND ARE PRACTICING IN A RURAL OR FRONTIER
19 COUNTY; AND ANY OTHER RELEVANT DATA AND INFORMATION ABOUT THE
20 INITIATIVE; AND

21 (b) THE RURAL PROGRAM OFFICE'S ANALYSIS OF THE
22 EFFECTIVENESS OF THE INITIATIVE AND RURAL TRACKS.

23 (2) THE REPORT MAY INCLUDE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR
24 LEGISLATIVE CHANGES TO THE INITIATIVE, INCLUDING RECOMMENDATIONS
25 FOR EXPANDING THE INITIATIVE.

26 **23-76.5-105. Initiative funding - repeal.** (1) THE GENERAL
27 ASSEMBLY SHALL ANNUALLY APPROPRIATE TO THE UNIVERSITY OF

1 COLORADO HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER CAMPUS ONE HUNDRED FIFTY
2 THOUSAND DOLLARS FOR THE RURAL PROGRAM OFFICE TO CARRY OUT ITS
3 DUTIES DESCRIBED IN SECTION 23-76.5-103. THE APPROPRIATION
4 DESCRIBED IN THIS SUBSECTION (1) IS SEPARATE FROM ANY
5 APPROPRIATION TO THE UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO, OR ANY CAMPUS OR
6 PROGRAM THEREOF, FOR A RURAL TRACK, AS DESCRIBED IN SUBSECTION
7 (2) OF THIS SECTION.

8 (2) (a) FOR THE 2022-23 STATE FISCAL YEAR, THE GENERAL
9 ASSEMBLY SHALL APPROPRIATE TO EACH OF THE FOLLOWING INSTITUTIONS
10 A MAXIMUM OF FOUR HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS FOR EACH PROGRAM
11 OR SCHOOL LISTED IN THIS SUBSECTION (2) TO ESTABLISH OR EXPAND AN
12 EXISTING RURAL TRACK PURSUANT TO THIS ARTICLE 76.5:

- 13 (I) ADAMS STATE UNIVERSITY, IN ITS NURSING PROGRAM;
- 14 (II) COLORADO MESA UNIVERSITY, IN ITS NURSING PROGRAM;
- 15 (III) THE COLORADO SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH, IN ITS MASTER
16 OF PUBLIC HEALTH PROGRAM;
- 17 (IV) COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY - PUEBLO, IN ITS SCHOOL OF
18 NURSING;
- 19 (V) METROPOLITAN STATE UNIVERSITY OF DENVER, IN ITS
20 NURSING PROGRAM;
- 21 (VI) THE UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO, IN THE FOLLOWING
22 PROGRAMS OR SCHOOLS:
 - 23 (A) AT THE HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER CAMPUS, IN ITS SCHOOL OF
24 DENTAL MEDICINE AND SCHOOL OF MEDICINE; AND
 - 25 (B) AT THE COLORADO SPRINGS CAMPUS, IN ITS NURSING
26 PROGRAM;
 - 27 (VII) THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO, IN ITS SCHOOL

1 OF NURSING;

2 (VIII) WESTERN COLORADO UNIVERSITY, IN ITS MASTER OF
3 BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE IN RURAL COMMUNITY HEALTH PROGRAM; AND

4 (IX) AT THE FOLLOWING INSTITUTIONS GOVERNED BY THE STATE
5 BOARD FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION:

6 (A) FRONT RANGE COMMUNITY COLLEGE, IN ITS NURSING
7 PROGRAM; AND

8 (B) OTERO COLLEGE, IN ITS NURSING PROGRAM.

9 (b) FOR FISCAL YEAR 2022-23, THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY SHALL
10 NOT APPROPRIATE MONEY TO AN INSTITUTION TO ESTABLISH OR OPERATE
11 A RURAL TRACK OTHER THAN AS DESCRIBED IN THIS SUBSECTION (2).

12 (c) THIS SUBSECTION (2) IS REPEALED, EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2023.

13 **SECTION 3. Safety clause.** The general assembly hereby finds,
14 determines, and declares that this act is necessary for the immediate
15 preservation of the public peace, health, or safety.