MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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130th MAINE LEGISLATURE

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Legislative Document

No. 1597

H.P. 1186

House of Representatives, April 27, 2021

An Act To Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue To Strengthen Maine's Health Care Workforce

Reference to the Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs suggested and ordered printed.

ROBERT B. HUNT

Clerk

Presented by Representative PIERCE of Falmouth.

Cosponsored by Representatives: BRENNAN of Portland, CRAVEN of Lewiston, MADIGAN of Waterville, MEYER of Eliot, STOVER of Boothbay, ZAGER of Portland, Senators: CHIPMAN of Cumberland, SANBORN of Cumberland.

Preamble. Two thirds of both Houses of the Legislature deeming it necessary in accordance with the Constitution of Maine, Article IX, Section 14 to authorize the issuance of bonds on behalf of the State of Maine to provide funds as described in this Act,

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

5 PART A

- **Sec. A-1. Authorization of bonds.** The Treasurer of State is authorized, under the direction of the Governor, to issue bonds in the name and on behalf of the State in an amount not exceeding \$11,000,000 for the purposes described in section 5 of this Part. The bonds are a pledge of the full faith and credit of the State. The bonds may not run for a period longer than 10 years from the date of the original issue of the bonds.
- **Sec. A-2. Records of bonds issued; Treasurer of State.** The Treasurer of State shall ensure that an account of each bond is kept showing the number of the bond, the name of the successful bidder to whom sold, the amount received for the bond, the date of sale and the date when payable.
- **Sec. A-3. Sale; how negotiated; proceeds appropriated.** The Treasurer of State may negotiate the sale of the bonds by direction of the Governor, but no bond may be loaned, pledged or hypothecated on behalf of the State. The proceeds of the sale of the bonds, which must be held by the Treasurer of State and paid by the Treasurer of State upon warrants drawn by the State Controller, are appropriated solely for the purposes set forth in this Part. Any unencumbered balances remaining at the completion of the project in this Part lapse to the Office of the Treasurer of State to be used for the retirement of general obligation bonds.
- **Sec. A-4. Interest and debt retirement.** The Treasurer of State shall pay interest due or accruing on any bonds issued under this Part and all sums coming due for payment of bonds at maturity.
- Sec. A-5. Disbursement of bond proceeds from General Fund bond issue. The proceeds of the sale of the bonds authorized under this Part must be expended as designated in the following schedule under the direction and supervision of the agencies and entities set forth in this section.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Provides funds to award grants to the University of New England Institute for Interprofessional Education and Practice to improve and expand collaborative teambased education of health care workers, including training in the use of telehealth and other technologies, to increase access to high-quality health care and to upgrade the capacity of federally qualified health centers and other community-based health care clinics and hospitals throughout the State in order to facilitate educational and clinical links to the University of New England Institute for Interprofessional Education and Practice and to enhance and expand their capacity to provide access to high-quality health care

Total \$11,000,000

Sec. A-6. Contingent upon ratification of bond issue. Sections 1 to 5 do not become effective unless the people of the State ratify the issuance of the bonds as set forth in this Part

- **Sec. A-7. Appropriation balances at year-end.** At the end of each fiscal year, all unencumbered appropriation balances representing state money carry forward. Bond proceeds that have not been expended within 10 years after the date of the sale of the bonds lapse to the Office of the Treasurer of State to be used for the retirement of general obligation bonds.
- **Sec. A-8. Bonds authorized but not issued.** Any bonds authorized but not issued within 5 years of ratification of this Part are deauthorized and may not be issued, except that the Legislature may, within 2 years after the expiration of that 5-year period, extend the period for issuing any remaining unissued bonds for an additional amount of time not to exceed 5 years.
- Sec. A-9. Referendum for ratification; submission at election; form of question; effective date. This Part must be submitted to the legal voters of the State at a statewide election held in the month of November following passage of this Act. The municipal officers of this State shall notify the inhabitants of their respective cities, towns and plantations to meet, in the manner prescribed by law for holding a statewide election, to vote on the acceptance or rejection of this Part by voting on the following question:

"Do you favor an \$11,000,000 bond issue to increase access to high-quality health care by expanding Maine's health care workforce and clinical capacity to use telehealth and other technologies through the awarding of grants to the University of New England, federally qualified health centers and other community-based health care clinics and hospitals throughout the State?"

The legal voters of each city, town and plantation shall vote by ballot on this question and designate their choice by a cross or check mark placed within a corresponding square below the word "Yes" or "No." The ballots must be received, sorted, counted and declared in open ward, town and plantation meetings and returns made to the Secretary of State in the same manner as votes for members of the Legislature. The Governor shall review the returns. If a majority of the legal votes are cast in favor of this Part, the Governor shall proclaim the result without delay and this Part becomes effective 30 days after the date of the proclamation.

The Secretary of State shall prepare and furnish to each city, town and plantation all ballots, returns and copies of this Part necessary to carry out the purposes of this referendum.

PART B

- Sec. B-1. 22 MRSA §2127, sub-§6-B is enacted to read:
- 6-B. Monitoring of grants. A program director or chief executive officer approved pursuant to subsection 2, paragraph C, subparagraph (3) shall monitor contracts resulting from grant awards established by the department concerning the programs of federally qualified health centers and other community-based health care clinics and hospitals

affiliated with a center promoting interprofessional health care education and practice efforts at a university in the State.

PART C

Sec. C-1. Interprofessional education of health care workers. Of the bond issue approved by the voters pursuant to Part A, \$7,000,000 must be used to fund the University of New England Institute for Interprofessional Education and Practice to

10 PART D

health care.

Sec. D-1. Grants to community-based health care clinics and hospitals. Of the bond issue approved by the voters pursuant to Part A, \$4,000,000 must be used to offer competitive grants pursuant to this Part. The grants must to be used to upgrade the capacity of federally qualified health centers and other community-based health care clinics and hospitals throughout the State in order to facilitate educational and clinical links to the University of New England Institute for Interprofessional Education and Practice and to enhance and expand their capacity to provide access to high-quality health care. The Department of Health and Human Services shall establish the Health Care Advisory Committee, referred to in this Part as "the committee."

improve and expand collaborative team-based education of health care workers, including

training in the use of telehealth and other technologies, to increase access to high-quality

- **1. Membership.** The Commissioner of Health and Human Services or the commissioner's designee shall serve as the chair of the committee and shall appoint the following 6 members:
 - A. A representative of critical access hospitals in this State;
 - B. A representative of a statewide organization representing low-income individuals;
 - C. A representative of an organization representing federally qualified health centers;
 - D. A representative of a foundation based in this State committed to improving the health of citizens in this State who has experience funding direct service for health care;
 - E. An individual representing physicians who has experience with health care; and
 - F. A representative of the University of New England.
- **2. Appointments.** The committee must be appointed and convene within 30 days of the passage of the referendum set out in Part A.
- **3. Duties.** The committee shall create an application for grants for interested parties within 60 days of passage of the referendum in Part A. The committee shall hold a bidders' conference within 7 days following issuance of the applications, after which an applicant has 18 days to complete the application. The committee shall award grants before March 1, 2022.
- **4. Distribution of balance of bond.** The committee shall establish an application process for the \$4,000,000 in health center, clinic and hospital grants. A recipient of a grant under this subsection must:
 - A. Be from an underserved community that has a demonstrated need for health care;

- B. Be a qualified health care provider, which includes but is not limited to: federally qualified health centers, hospitals, veterans' health care facilities, health care facilities established by the United States Department of Defense serving active duty military personnel, state-based nonprofit health care centers and municipally supported health clinics;
- C. Be established as a health care clinical training site affiliated with the University of New England; and
- D. Demonstrate a need for telehealth or other infrastructure to assist in remote learning and health care delivery.
- **5. Completion date.** The awarding of grants under this Part must be completed by December 1, 2023, and following disbursement of these grants the committee terminates.

12 PART E

Sec. E-1. Contingent effective date. Parts B to D take effect only if the bond issue under Part A is approved by the voters of the State.

15 SUMMARY

The funds provided by this bond issue, in the amount of \$11,000,000, will be used to provide funding on the following basis: \$7,000,000 to be used for the University of New England Institute for Interprofessional Education and Practice to improve and expand collaborative team-based education of health care workers, including training in the use of telehealth and other technologies, and to increase access to high-quality health care; and \$4,000,000 to be used to upgrade the capacity of federally qualified health centers and other community-based health care clinics and hospitals throughout the State in order to facilitate educational and clinical links with the University of New England Institute for Interprofessional Education and Practice and to enhance and expand their capacity to provide access to high-quality health care.