

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

Virtual Meeting

March 12, 2021, 10:00 a.m.

Minutes

Workgroup Members

Karin DiBari, Matthew Dudzic, Cheryl Duncan De Pinto, Damean Freas, Stacey Little, Donna Parker, Andrew Pollack, Gene Ransom, Richard Rohrs, Elizabeth Vaidya

Maryland Department of Health (MDH) Staff Present

Sara Seitz

Also in Attendance

Anish Prakash, California SLRP; Jane Krienke, Maryland Hospital Association; Kelly Kyser, MedStar Emergency Physicians; Susan Lawrence, Government Affairs, University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB); Tia Murphy, Maryland Hospital Association; Shadae Paul, Maryland Health Care Commission; Megan Renfrew, Maryland Health Services Cost Review Commission; Caryn Rizell, California SLRP; Kelly Schutz, MedStar Emergency Physicians; Robert Sewell, Alaska SHARP, Ben Steffen, Maryland Health Care Commission; Karin Weaver, MedStar Good Samaritan Hospital

Notes

I. Meeting Opening and Welcome/ Roll Call: The virtual meeting was called to order (10:02 a.m.) by Sara Seitz who 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, January 8, 2021, 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 program's current operations. Details regarding Fiscal Year 2021 awarded applicants were shared (see presentation for descriptors of the awarded applicants). The 2021 application cycle is currently open, March 1 – April 15, 2021.

III. Priority Presentations

- A. Robert Sewell, Alaska Division of Public Health, Alaska DHSS, presented on the state's loan repayment programs (SHARP) (see presentation slides for details).

Dr. Sewell encouraged focus on the public policy intent of the program, to improve healthcare access through enhancement of the healthcare workforce versus “loan repayment.” He stepped through a variety of aspects of the program including mention of the SHARP advisory council, employer partnerships, quarterly work reports and invoicing, and prioritization of hard-to-fill positions.

- B. Caryn Rizell and Anish Prakash, California State Loan Repayment Program (SLRP), presented slides regarding California’s program (see presentation slides for details). Ms. Rizell noted the variety of loan repayment programs within the state and details of the program’s relationships with participating practice sites.
- C. Elizabeth Vaidya, Maryland Primary Care Office, reviewed the data currently utilized to determine provider shortages for HRSA’s Health Professional Shortage Area designations, highlighting data not currently available regarding primary care physicians, dental health, and mental health providers (see presentation slides for details).

IV. Discussion

Major topics areas discussed include:

- A. The goal of the loan repayment programs is to increase the healthcare provider pool to improve healthcare access across the state.
- B. Alaska and California appear able to access greater federal funding for state loan repayments based on program structures that allow for greater diversity in disciplines and partners. These programs exceed the required federal match with state/foundation/employer funds.
- C. Funding sources
 1. Necessary to begin conversations with employers about palatability of potential matching funds structure in Maryland.
 2. Would Maryland Health Services Cost Review Commission be a viable funding source?
 3. What loan repayment offerings are currently available direct from employers to provider staff? Employers and recipients taxed in this situation.
- D. There could be opportunities to leverage other Maryland loan repayment programs, such as the Dent Care dental loan repayment program.

V. Next Steps

Workgroup members discussed the idea of developing a subgroup structure to best tackle next steps toward final recommendations. Recommended subgroups include the following focus areas: sustainable funding structure, healthcare workforce data, and student incentives. A survey will be

distributed to Workgroup membership and resulting meetings will be set prior to the next full workgroup meeting.

- VI. Open Discussion with Public Comment:** No guests provided comment during the time dedicated for this purpose.

- VII. Adjournment:** (12:03 p.m.) Motion: Cheryl Duncan De Pinto
Second: Matthew Dudzic