

**Second Regular Session
Seventy-third General Assembly
STATE OF COLORADO**

PREAMENDED

*This Unofficial Version Includes Committee
Amendments Not Yet Adopted on Second Reading*

LLS NO. 22-0909.02 Conrad Imel x2313

SENATE BILL 22-172

SENATE SPONSORSHIP

Winter and Rankin, Coleman, Liston, Priola

HOUSE SPONSORSHIP

Roberts and Rich, Bernett, Bird, Caraveo, Catlin, McLachlan, Mullica, Pelton, Soper,
Valdez D., Van Beber

Senate Committees

Health & Human Services
Appropriations

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 OR
6 PROGRAM ESTABLISHED BY AN INSTITUTION PURSUANT TO SECTION
7 23-76.5-102.

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

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

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

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

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

26 **23-76.5-102. Colorado rural health-care workforce initiative**
27 **- institution health-care professionals rural tracks.** (1) THERE IS

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

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

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

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

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

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

26 (d) OFFER DIDACTIC CURRICULUM THAT THE RURAL PROGRAM
27 OFFICE DEVELOPS IN COLLABORATION WITH OTHER INSTITUTIONS THAT

1 OPERATE A RURAL TRACK RELATED TO PRACTICING THE HEALTH-CARE
2 DISCIPLINE IN RURAL OR FRONTIER COUNTIES TO STUDENTS IN THE RURAL
3 TRACK;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1 (c) TRAINING PRECEPTORS WHO PRACTICE IN RURAL OR FRONTIER
2 COUNTIES TO PROVIDE PERSONALIZED CLINICAL INSTRUCTION OR TRAINING
3 TO RURAL TRACK STUDENTS; AND

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

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

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

27 (c) RECEIVING A SCHOLARSHIP DESCRIBED IN THIS SUBSECTION (6)

1 DOES NOT AFFECT THE STUDENTS' ELIGIBILITY FOR THE COLORADO
2 HEALTH SERVICE CORPS DESCRIBED IN PART 5 OF ARTICLE 1.5 OF TITLE 25
3 OR FOR THE DENTAL LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM DESCRIBED IN ARTICLE
4 23 OF TITLE 25.

5 **23-76.5-103. Initiative administrative and education support**
6 **- university of Colorado school of medicine rural program.** (1) THE
7 RURAL PROGRAM OFFICE SHALL PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO THE
8 INSTITUTIONS ESTABLISHING AND OPERATING A RURAL TRACK. THE RURAL
9 PROGRAM OFFICE SHALL:

10 (a) PROVIDE GUIDANCE TO AN INSTITUTION REGARDING
11 RECRUITING AND ADMITTING STUDENTS COMMITTED TO WORKING IN
12 RURAL AREAS;

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

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

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

26 (e) PROVIDE ANY OTHER TECHNICAL OR ADMINISTRATIVE
27 ASSISTANCE THAT MAY BENEFIT AN INSTITUTION THAT IS ESTABLISHING OR

1 OPERATING A RURAL TRACK.

2 (2) (a) THE RURAL PROGRAM OFFICE SHALL DEVELOP METRICS TO
3 EVALUATE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE INITIATIVE AND RURAL TRACKS,
4 ANNUALLY EVALUATE THE INITIATIVE AND RURAL TRACKS, AND CREATE
5 THE REPORT DESCRIBED IN SECTION 23-76.5-104.

6 (b) THE RURAL PROGRAM OFFICE MAY COLLABORATE WITH THE
7 COLORADO AREA HEALTH EDUCATION CENTERS, THE DEPARTMENT OF
8 PUBLIC HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT, A STATEWIDE ORGANIZATION OF
9 HOSPITALS, AND THE COLORADO RURAL HEALTH CENTER TO ASSESS
10 UNMET RURAL COMMUNITY HEALTH-CARE PRIORITY NEEDS, COLLECT
11 DATA TO SUPPORT THE ASSESSMENT, AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO
12 THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FOR FUNDING TO SUPPORT ADDING MORE
13 SCHOOLS, PROGRAMS, AND HEALTH-CARE PROFESSIONALS TO MEET THAT
14 NEED. THE RURAL PROGRAM OFFICE MAY INCLUDE THE
15 RECOMMENDATIONS IN ITS ANNUAL REPORT.

16 **23-76.5-104. Initiative reporting.** (1) ON OR BEFORE NOVEMBER
17 1, 2023, AND ON OR BEFORE NOVEMBER 1 EACH YEAR THEREAFTER, THE
18 RURAL PROGRAM OFFICE SHALL SUBMIT A REPORT TO THE HOUSE OF
19 REPRESENTATIVES EDUCATION COMMITTEE AND THE SENATE EDUCATION
20 COMMITTEE, OR THEIR SUCCESSOR COMMITTEES, CONCERNING THE
21 INITIATIVE. THE REPORT MUST INCLUDE:

22 (a) INFORMATION ABOUT EACH INSTITUTION'S HEALTH-CARE
23 PROFESSIONALS RURAL TRACKS, THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN
24 EACH RURAL TRACK, THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS WHO HAVE COMPLETED
25 EACH RURAL TRACK AND ARE PRACTICING IN A RURAL OR FRONTIER
26 COUNTY; AND ANY OTHER RELEVANT DATA AND INFORMATION ABOUT THE
27 INITIATIVE; AND

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

3 (2) THE REPORT MAY INCLUDE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR
4 LEGISLATIVE CHANGES TO THE INITIATIVE, INCLUDING RECOMMENDATIONS
5 FOR EXPANDING THE INITIATIVE.

6 **23-76.5-105. Initiative funding - repeal.** (1) THE GENERAL
7 ASSEMBLY SHALL ANNUALLY APPROPRIATE TO THE UNIVERSITY OF
8 COLORADO HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER CAMPUS ONE HUNDRED FIFTY
9 THOUSAND DOLLARS FOR THE RURAL PROGRAM OFFICE TO CARRY OUT ITS
10 DUTIES DESCRIBED IN SECTION 23-76.5-103. THE APPROPRIATION
11 DESCRIBED IN THIS SUBSECTION (1) IS SEPARATE FROM ANY
12 APPROPRIATION TO THE UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO, OR ANY CAMPUS OR
13 PROGRAM THEREOF, FOR A RURAL TRACK, AS DESCRIBED IN SUBSECTION
14 (2) OF THIS SECTION.

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

- 20 (I) ADAMS STATE UNIVERSITY, IN ITS NURSING PROGRAM;
- 21 (II) COLORADO MESA UNIVERSITY, IN ITS NURSING PROGRAM;
- 22 (III) THE COLORADO SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH, IN ITS MASTER
23 OF PUBLIC HEALTH PROGRAM;
- 24 (IV) COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY - PUEBLO, IN ITS SCHOOL OF
25 NURSING;
- 26 (V) METROPOLITAN STATE UNIVERSITY OF DENVER, IN ITS
27 NURSING PROGRAM;

1 (VI) THE UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO, IN THE FOLLOWING
2 PROGRAMS OR SCHOOLS:

3 (A) AT THE HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER CAMPUS, IN ITS SCHOOL OF
4 DENTAL MEDICINE AND IN ITS DOCTOR OF MEDICINE PROGRAM IN THE
5 SCHOOL OF MEDICINE; AND

6 (B) AT THE COLORADO SPRINGS CAMPUS, IN ITS NURSING
7 PROGRAM;

8 (VII) THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO, IN ITS SCHOOL
9 OF NURSING;

10 (VIII) WESTERN COLORADO UNIVERSITY, IN ITS MASTER OF
11 BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE IN RURAL COMMUNITY HEALTH PROGRAM; ==

12 (IX) COLORADO MOUNTAIN COLLEGE, IN ITS NURSING PROGRAM;

13 (X) FORT LEWIS COLLEGE, IN ITS NURSING PROGRAM OPERATED IN
14 AGREEMENT WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO NURSING PROGRAM;

15 AND

16 (XI) AT THE FOLLOWING INSTITUTIONS GOVERNED BY THE STATE
17 BOARD FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION:

18 (A) MORGAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE, IN ITS NURSING PROGRAM;

19 AND

20 (B) TRINIDAD STATE COLLEGE, IN ITS NURSING PROGRAM.

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

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

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