



IowaCollegeAid.gov

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## NEWS RELEASE

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### College Aid Program Increases Health Care Access in Iowa Communities

#### *Health Care Professional Loan Repayment Program Pairs Doctors, Towns in Need*

**Des Moines, IA, August 18, 2015** – Iowa College Aid today announced a combined total of 14 healthcare professionals were designated recipients of a state program established to assist high-need Iowa communities in attracting and retaining health care professionals. The Health Care Professional Loan Repayment Program (HPRP) provides loan repayment benefits to health care professionals who practice in designated high-need communities for up to four years and whose communities agree to provide a dollar-for-dollar match to the state funds.

“The Health Care Professional Loan Repayment Program is a public-private partnership between the state of Iowa and communities wanting to ensure their residents have access to expert health care,” said Karen Misjak, Executive Director of the Iowa College Student Aid Commission. “This program has been instrumental in attracting and retaining healthcare providers in many of Iowa’s rural communities.”

This year’s group of recipients includes osteopathic doctors, physician assistants, podiatrists and physical therapists. With the addition of these 14 recipients, a total of 39 healthcare providers are serving such communities as Atlantic, Boone, Carlisle, Carroll, Centerville, Cherokee, Corydon, Dunlap, Eagle Grove, Forest City, Greenfield, Gowrie, Guthrie Center, Hampton, Indianola, Jefferson, Keosauqua, Lake City, LeMars, Manchester, Marshalltown, Mason City, Osage, Osceola, Ottumwa, Sheldon, Spirit Lake, Storm Lake, Toledo, Waverly, Webster City, West Union and Woodbine.

“The Iowa Health Care Professional Loan Repayment Program provides a great opportunity for physicians to off-set the costs associated with obtaining the required education and training to serve rural Iowans,” said Mitch Morrison, Director of Provider Services and Recruitment at Mercy Medical Center – North Iowa in Mason City. “The matching program assists with recruitment efforts for providers who are interested in practicing in rural communities. The program is a great benefit and continues to positively impact health care in Iowa.”

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Combined awards for this new cohort of recipients totaled \$544,168 to be paid out over a four-year period. The maximum annual award is \$12,500 for up to four years, not to exceed \$50,000. The average aggregate award for this year's recipients was \$38,869.

“The Iowa Health Care Professional Loan Repayment Program is a key component of our physician recruitment strategy and has allowed us to work with very talented young physicians,” said Clint J. Christianson, President of Mercy Medical Center in Centerville. “Medical education costs are a significant concern for most physicians coming out of residency programs these days and this matching loan repayment program allows us to work together with these very skilled physicians to come up with a plan to allow them to consider Centerville as a place to practice their art.”

“The Health Care Professional Loan Repayment Program is an excellent tool to help combat the critical shortage of health professionals in rural Iowa communities,” said Jane Eagan of McFarland Clinic PC. “It has been a great benefit in the recruitment of a podiatrist for the communities of Carroll, Jefferson, Guthrie Center and Ida Grove. We are eager for the podiatrist to begin practice at McFarland Clinic this month. This will greatly enhance the health and wellness of our patients in rural Iowa and will further our coordinated care efforts.”

For more information on the HPRP or other loan repayment programs provided by the State of Iowa, visit Iowa College Aid's website at [www.iowacollegeaid.gov](http://www.iowacollegeaid.gov)

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***About the Iowa College Student Aid Commission***

*Iowa College Aid provides college access, financial literacy, and outreach services to Iowa's students and families as they prepare, plan and pay for college. Iowa College Aid also administers state scholarship, grant, work study, and loan forgiveness programs totaling over \$70.0 million annually, conducts research and distributes higher education data, and offers Iowans assistance in obtaining student financial aid and college-related information. Through its role, Iowa College Aid also serves as the state-designated administrator of the U.S. Department of Education's College Access Challenge Grant, which is designed to increase the college-going culture in Iowa. Additionally, Iowa College Aid is the administrator of the Federal GEAR-UP Grant, a multi-year state-wide grant which is being utilized to provide early awareness programming and outreach initiatives to thousands of Iowa's students and families. More information is available at [www.IowaCollegeAid.gov](http://www.IowaCollegeAid.gov).*