- HOUSE RESEARCH -----

Bill Summary =

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Overview

This bill establishes a dental loan forgiveness program, a dental services demonstration project, and a retired dentists program, and increases reimbursement for certain dental services and providers.

Section

1 **Dentist loan forgiveness.** Adds § 144.698. Requires the commissioner of health to establish and administer a dental loan forgiveness program.

Subd. 1. Definitions. Defines "qualified educational loan."

Subd. 2. Creation of account. Establishes a dental education account in the general fund and requires the commissioner to establish a loan forgiveness program for dentists.

Subd. 3. Eligibility. Requires dental students to apply while attending a dental program and licensed dentists to apply within three years of graduation or program completion. Requires applicants to agree to serve: (1) a three-year obligation in which at least 15 percent of encounters involve patients on public assistance or who pay for services based on a sliding fee; or (2) a three-year obligation in a designated rural area. Specifies when a service obligation begins.

Subd. 4. Loan forgiveness. Allows the commissioner to accept up to 14 applicants per year. Allows applicants chosen to designate up to \$10,000 a year for four years as a qualified educational loan. Specifies other program requirements.

Subd. 5. Penalty for nonfulfillment. Requires the commissioner to collect payments made and interest if a service commitment is not fulfilled.

Subd. 6. Suspension or waiver of obligation. Provides that obligations cancel in event of a participant's death and specifies the conditions under which the commissioner can waive or suspend payment or service obligations.

2 **Retired dentist program.** Adds § 256.958. Requires the commissioner to establish a program

to reimburse retired dentists providing volunteer services for the cost of license fees and malpractice insurance.

- **Dental services demonstration project.** Amends § 256B.69, by adding subd. 6c. Requires the commissioner to establish a dental services demonstration project in Crow Wing, Todd, Morrison, Wadena, and Cass counties to provide dental services to MA, GAMC, and MinnesotaCare recipients. Allows the commissioner to contract on a prepaid basis with a nonprofit health service plan corporation, an HMO, or a community integrated service network to provide services, or to administer a fee-for-service system.
- **Physician and dental reimbursement.** Amends § 256B.76. Effective October 1, 2001, sets payment rates for diagnostic examinations and dental x-rays for children at the lower of the submitted charge or 85 percent of the median of 1999 charges. Allows the commissioner to designate dentists and dental clinics as critical access providers, and to increase reimbursement to these providers by 50 percent above what they would otherwise receive. Provide criteria for review and requires the commissioner to adjust prepaid health plan rates to reflect increased reimbursement to critical access providers. Also makes a technical change.
- **Appropriation.** Appropriates money from the general fund to the commissioner of health for the dental loan forgiveness program, and to the commissioner of human services for the retired dentist program and increases in dental rates.
- **Repealer.** Repeals section 256B.037, subd. 5 (relates to contracting on a prepaid basis with an organization for comprehensive health services, including dental services).
- **Effective dates.** States that sections 3 and 6 are effective January 1, 2002.