For An Act To Be Entitled

AN ACT TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF HEALTH CARE WORKERS FROM GROUPS THAT ARE UNDERREPRESENTED INCLUDING NATIVE AMERICANS, AFRICAN-AMERICANS, ALASKAN NATIVES, PACIFIC AMERICANS, HISPANIC AMERICANS, NATIVE HAWAIIANS, AND PACIFIC ISLANDERS IN HEALTH PROFESSION FIELDS IN THE STATE OF ARKANSAS; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Subtitle

THE HEALTH CARE STUDENTS SUMMER ENRICHMENT PROGRAM FOR UNDERREPRESENTED STUDENT POPULATIONS ACT.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

SECTION 1. Arkansas Code Title 6, Chapter 5 is amended to add an additional subchapter to read as follows:

6-5-801. Title.
This subchapter shall be known and may be cited as the "Health Care Student Summer Enrichment Program For Underrepresented Student Populations Act".

6-5-802. Intent -- Findings.
(a) This subchapter is intended to ensure academic success and completion of medical, pharmacy, and nursing school by an increasing number of minority students.
(b) The General Assembly finds that:
(1) The healthcare workforce and its ability to deliver quality care for all, including racial and ethnic minorities, can be improved substantially by increasing the proportion of underrepresented United States racial and ethnic minorities among health professionals;

(2) Nationally, African-Americans, Native Americans, Mexican Americans, and Mainland Puerto Ricans make up twenty-five percent (25%) of the United States population.

(B) However, racial and ethnic minority students make up less than eight percent (8%) of practicing physicians and less than five (5%) of medical, pharmacy, and nursing school faculties;

(3) Summer enrichment programs have proven to aid in the recruitment and retention of students and faculty in all colleges on the campus of the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences;

(4) Statistics concerning practicing physicians are as follows:

(A) Practicing physicians in Arkansas, seven thousand eight hundred eighty-nine (7,889);

(B) Practicing African-American physicians in Arkansas, one hundred fifty (150) or one and nine-tenths percent (1.9%) of Arkansas practicing physicians;

(C) An Arkansas majority physician to patient ratio of one (1) majority physician to five hundred seventy (570) persons;

(D) An Arkansas minority physician: patient ratio of one (1) physician to three thousand one hundred twenty-five (3125) persons;

(E) A national physician to patient ratio of one (1) physician to five hundred twenty (520) persons; and

(F) Most minority physicians practice in underserved areas; and

(5) It necessary for the public health and welfare of Arkansas to create the Health Care Student Summer Enrichment Program Act For Underrepresented Student Groups Act.

6-5-803. Arkansas Academic Physician Program.

(a) There is created within the Department of Higher Education the Arkansas Academic Physician Program.

(b) To ensure academic success and completion of medical, pharmacy, or nursing school, the Arkansas Academic Physician Program shall provide
academic support for students preparing to matriculate at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences.

(c) The program shall offer tutoring, group study, test-taking strategies and supplemental instruction to promote collegiality and enhance the student’s ability to master the basic sciences and increase the applicant pool.

(d) The program aims to offer premedical, prepharmacy, and prenursing students in Arkansas from diverse backgrounds the opportunity to engage in a variety of clinical hands-on experiences.

6-5-704. Health Care Student Summer Enrichment Program For Underrepresented Student Groups.

(a) There is created within the Department of Higher Education the Health Care Student Summer Enrichment Program for Underrepresented Student Groups.

(b) The program is an intensive six-week program targeting undergraduate students designed to:

(1) Increase awareness among racial and ethnic minority undergraduate students of:

(A) Common medical problems in underserved communities; and

(B) Career opportunities in fields of medicine;

(2) Provide participants with a meaningful experience in health related fields; and

(3) Simulate the interest of racial and ethnic minority undergraduate students in careers in science, medicine, and biomedical research.

(c) The program shall be designed to encourage participation by students of diverse backgrounds.

/s/ Allen