

# Rhode Island Health Professional Loan Repayment Program (RI HPLRP)

## BOARD MEETING MINUTES

March 1, 2006

### ATTENDING:

Kathleen Baer	Brown Medical School
Ernest Balasco	Thundermist Health Center
M. Christine Benoit, DMD	Public Member/Governor's Designee
Kerrie Jones Clark	RI Health Center Association
Dave Leveillee	RI Medical Society (representing Newell Warde )
Mary Anne Miller, RN, MPH	Chair, RI Department of Health (HEALTH)
Linda Makhlouf	RI Higher Education Assistance Authority (via conference call)
Ruth Ricciarelli	Hospital Association of Rhode Island

### UNABLE TO ATTEND:

Dayle Joseph, PhD	University of RI, College of Nursing
(Vacant)	RI Senate
(Vacant)	RI House of Representatives

### STAFF:

Maureen Ross, Office of Primary Care, HEALTH  
Carla Lundquist, Office of Primary Care, HEALTH

## I. Call to Order

M. Miller, Chair, RI HPLRP Board called the meeting to order at 8:37 a.m., welcomed members and noted that six of eleven Board members (or their representatives) were present, establishing a quorum.

## II. Old Business

*Review and Approval of RI HPLRP Board Meeting Minutes, March 30, 2005*

M. Miller asked members to review minutes from the last meeting. C. Benoit noted a typographical error on page 2, line 5 (item # A.1). A motion was made by C. Benoit to approve the minutes as amended, seconded by K. Baer, and unanimously approved with the exception of K. Clark, who abstained because she was not present at the last meeting.

### III. New Business

#### A. Review and Acceptance of 2006 Applications

C. Lundquist provided an overview of the 2006 application cycle, noting that application packets (n=47) were sent to Executive, Medical, and Dental Directors of all community health centers, as well as to all hospitals located in HPSAs in January 2006, with an application due date of February 17, 2006. The application/award cycle dates were moved up approximately one month earlier than last year to enable processing of contracts, loan verifications, and payment disbursement in advance of fiscal year-end closing activities. Recognizing that contracts for the 2004 cycle were mainly executed in May 2004, a deadline of June 15, 2006 was set for current service obligations to be complete, to allow new awardees from 2004 to apply for retention in the 2006 cycle, while also ensuring a sufficient margin of time before the fiscal year-end to process a contract/verification/payment. This requirement was included on the provider application.

The total amount of funds available for the 2006 cycle was \$62,150. The funding available reflects the reduction of the RI federal grant award to \$31,075 from the requested amount of \$50K. The reduction was due to the RI HPLRP having had to have turn back federal funds we were unable to match during the 2002-2003 program cycle.

Nine applications were received and evaluated for eligibility and completeness. There were challenges in verifying that the requisite number of direct outpatient care hours were being performed by the health professional applicants, and the provider application will be revised to require a weekly schedule for the 2007 cycle. In addition, initiatives to re-educate eligible sites and providers on the requirements of the program will be introduced, and the Office of Primary Care will work with the federal loan repayment program to coordinate award, eligible educational loan, and service obligation information.

The Board reviewed the application summary, discussed program requirements, and accepted four of nine applications. C. Lundquist provided a summary of the accepted applicants and their respective scores. She noted that all four applicants are currently licensed and in good standing in Rhode Island.

#### NEW APPLICATIONS ACCEPTED (n = 4)

1. Kate Frometa, CNM, Thundermist Health Center, Woonsocket, RI (Score = 45). Ms. Frometa reports an outstanding loan balance of \$63,000.
2. Elena Kwetkowski, DO [Family Practice], Family Health Services, Coventry, RI (Score = 36). Dr. Kwetkowski reports an outstanding loan balance of \$132,000.
3. Mary Mumford-Haley, CNM, East Bay Family Health Care, Riverside, RI (Score = 26). Ms. Mumford-Haley reports an outstanding loan balance of \$12,000.
4. Kristin Lichtenberg, MD [Family Practice], Wood River Health Services, Hopkinton, RI (Score = 20). Dr. Lichtenberg reports an outstanding loan balance of \$94,000.

No retention applications were accepted for the 2006 loan repayment cycle.

### ***B. Awards Determination for 2006***

Following discussion of the applicants' scores, outstanding debt, the relative need of the sites, and the maximum allowable awards, E. Balasco motioned to authorize two-year loan repayment contracts in the amount of \$17,000 (\$8,500/year) for Ms. Frometa, \$33,150 (\$16,575/year) for Dr. Kwetkowski, and \$12,000 (\$6,000/year) for Ms. Mumford-Haley. The motion was seconded by K. Clark and after discussion of several alternatives, was approved by all present with the exception of E. Balasco, who abstained due to possible conflict of interest. In addition, E. Balasco made a motion that if Ms. Frometa elects to decline her RI HPLRP award in favor of pursuing federal loan repayment, the \$17,000 would be reallocated to Dr. Kwetkowski. The motion was seconded by C. Benoit and unanimously approved. The Board also authorized C. Lundquist to notify candidates immediately in writing that their applications had been approved for funding to facilitate loan balance verification and disbursement of awards before the end of the state's fiscal year.

### ***C. Review of Scoring Methodology and Community Needs Index***

At the last meeting, the Board discussed update of the Community Needs Index (CNI). This task is still in process but must be done in conjunction with an update of the Scoring Methodology. Application scores over the last few years have been low, because several of the factors in the current scoring are no longer applicable to most, if not all sites. For example, as more sites adopt open-access scheduling policies, there are few to none who qualify for points on the appointment wait time factor. For these reasons, Office of Primary Care staff will analyze the scoring and CNI together, and solicit input from key partners, including loan repayment programs in other New England states to compare strategies for scoring.

### ***D. RI HPLRP Board Vacancies***

It was noted that the Board currently has two vacancies. Board members are needed from the RI House of Representatives and the RI Senate. The need for these appointments will be brought to the attention of the HEALTH Legislative Liaison.

### ***E. RI HPLRP Statutes and Rules/ Regulation Updates***

The Board will be able to better address the legislative changes needed for alignment with the federal loan repayment program once the House and Senate vacancies are filled.

### ***F. 2007 SLRP Grant Application***

The State Loan Repayment Program grant application to the Bureau of Health Professions (BHP) for the 2007 RI HPLRP must be submitted online in May 2006. The application will be submitted for \$50,000 of federal funding. It is anticipated that application packets for the 2007 cycle will be distributed in December 2006, with the Board to meet in early February 2007.

C. Benoit motioned to adjourn, seconded by K. Clark. The meeting adjourned at 10:30 AM.