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**Department of Health  
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Anchorage, Alaska

**STATE OF ALASKA**

**PRESS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Alaska opens enrollment to attract health care workers with focus on underserved communities**

January 12, 2021 ANCHORAGE – Enrollment is now open for a program to attract medical and health care practitioners, especially for those providing care to underserved populations. The newly updated version of this program, known as SHARP-3, offers repayments for education loans or direct financial incentives.

“We are thrilled to extend this program which has a proven track record of serving Alaskans, especially those most in need,” said SHARP Program Director Robert Sewell. “The program incentives have also proven successful in attracting talented medical and health care providers to come to Alaska and work in our diverse communities.” About 100 health care and medical providers are enrolled in the SHARP program each year in Alaska. The program has had 430 contracts since 2010.

Dr. Adam McMahan, currently serving patients in Haines and Klukwan in southeast Alaska, commented that his young family faced daunting student loans after graduating and that he was relieved to be accepted to the SHARP program. In a letter of support for the program Dr. McMahan commented, “SHARP allowed us to responsibly follow our affinity for the rural corners of this state.”

The newest phase now open for enrollment expands participation to cover medical, dental, behavioral health, and other disciplines working in a broader range of practice settings. Alaska’s SHARP program is a public-private partnership. Public resources include funding from the federal Health Resources and Services Administration, the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, and the Mat-Su Health Foundation. Employers of participating health care practitioners also contribute funding.

“Recognizing the connection between the accessibility of quality health care services and the needs of our beneficiaries, the Trust has been a strong supporter of the SHARP program,” said Mike Abbott, CEO of the Alaska Mental Health Trust, one of the funders of the program. “SHARP has proven to be an effective tool to address existing health care workforce shortages, and we are pleased that the expanded SHARP-3 is now available to providers.”

More information for practitioners and employers interested in enrolling can be found at the Division of Public Health’s [Alaska SHARP program](#).

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