§ 236-a. Study of health professional employment incentives. 1. The legislature hereby finds and declares that:

a. Some parts of rural New York are suffering from physician and nurse practitioner shortages forcing residents to forego proper care or travel long distances to receive health care. Rural areas have particular characteristics such as low population density, inadequate transportation, increasing elderly population, and a lack of economies of scale. These issues make recruiting and retaining physicians and nurse practitioners in rural areas more challenging than in suburban and urban settings.

b. Therefore it is incumbent upon the state to provide incentives and assistance to physicians and nurse practitioners willing to practice in these shortage areas.

2. The Charles D. Cook office of rural health, in consultation with the rural health council, is hereby authorized and directed to conduct a study to analyze incentive options to encourage physicians and nurse practitioners to practice in rural, underserved areas. The report shall contain, but not be limited to, evaluations of the following incentive options: high needs service bonuses, signing bonuses, tax credits, small business assistance for beginning practices, programs designed to recruit high school students, and rural medical education tracks in medical schools. The report shall contain an analysis of current state level loan repayment programs and their effectiveness and may consider any similar local programs. The report shall also provide information on federal programs and their impact on New York state rural physician and nurse practitioner recruitment. The study shall make recommendations as to which incentives are the most effective in recruitment and retention of such health professionals.

3. The director of the Charles D. Cook office of rural health is hereby directed to prepare and present to the legislature, on or before March first of the year next succeeding the effective date of this section, a report containing a summary of its findings and recommendations.