

Senate Bill 442

By: Senators Hill of the 4th, Marable of the 52nd and Thomas of the 10th

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT

1 To amend Title 31 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to health, so as to  
2 authorize the Department of Community Health to award grants, as funds become available,  
3 to rural hospitals for public health purposes; to provide for the Department of Community  
4 Health to promulgate rules and regulations for effective administration of such grants; to  
5 provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

7 **SECTION 1.**

8 Title 31 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to health, is amended in  
9 subsection (f) of Code Section 31-5A-4, relating to the department's powers, duties,  
10 functions, and responsibilities, divisions, directors, the Office of Women's Health, and  
11 contracts for health benefits, by striking the word "and" at the end of paragraph (6), by  
12 striking the period at the end of paragraph (7) and inserting in lieu thereof the word and  
13 symbol "; and", and by adding a new paragraph (8) to read as follows:

14 "(8) Is authorized to award grants, as funds are available, to hospital authorities for public  
15 health purposes, pursuant to Code Sections 31-7-94 and 31-7-94.1."

16 **SECTION 2.**

17 Said title is further amended by striking Code Section 31-7-94, relating to grants to hospital  
18 authorities, and inserting in its place the following:

19 "31-7-94.

20 The state is authorized to make grants, as funds are available, to hospital authorities for  
21 public health purposes, provided that any funds so granted shall be distributed to and  
22 among the various public hospital authorities in the state in proportion to the number of  
23 hospital beds operated by each such hospital authority at the end of the calendar year  
24 preceding the grant. Funds shall be distributed to public hospitals operated by consolidated  
25 governments in the same manner as to authority hospitals prescribed in this Code section.

1 Grants made by the state pursuant to this Code section shall be administered by the  
 2 Department of ~~Human Resources~~ Community Health in accordance with such rules,  
 3 regulations, and procedures as it shall deem necessary for effective administration of such  
 4 grants."

### 5 SECTION 3.

6 Said title is further amended by striking subsections (e), (f), and (g) of Code Section  
 7 31-7-94.1, relating to certification of rural hospitals for grant eligibility and rules and  
 8 regulations relative to the "Rural Hospital Authorities Assistance Act," and inserting in their  
 9 respective places the following:

10 "(e) Notwithstanding the provisions of Code Section 31-7-94, the ~~department~~ Department  
 11 of Community Health is authorized to make grants to rural hospitals certified as meeting  
 12 the requirements of subsection (d) of this Code section. Such grants may be for any of the  
 13 following purposes:

14 (1) Infrastructure development, including, without being limited to, facility renovation  
 15 or equipment acquisition; provided, however, that the amount granted to any qualified  
 16 hospital may not exceed the expenditure thresholds that would constitute a new  
 17 institutional health service requiring a certificate of need under Chapter 6 of this title and  
 18 the grant award may be conditioned upon obtaining local matching funds;

19 (2) Strategic planning, including, without being limited to, strategies for personnel  
 20 retention or recruitment, development of an emergency medical network, or the  
 21 development of a collaborative and integrated health care delivery system with other  
 22 health care providers, and the grant award may be conditioned upon obtaining local  
 23 matching funds for items such as telemedicine, billing systems, and medical records. For  
 24 the purposes of this paragraph, the maximum grant to any grantee shall be \$200,000.00;  
 25 or

26 (3) Nontraditional health care delivery systems, excluding operational funds and  
 27 purposes for which grants may be made under paragraph (1) or (2) of this subsection. For  
 28 the purposes of this paragraph, the maximum grant to any grantee shall be \$1.5 million.

29 (f) In awarding grants under this Code section, the ~~department~~ Department of Community  
 30 Health may give priority to any otherwise eligible rural hospital which meets the definition  
 31 of a 'necessary provider' as specified in the state's 'Rural Healthcare Plan' of May, 1998.

32 (g) ~~The department shall adopt regulations to implement its powers and duties under this~~  
 33 ~~Code section.~~ The Department of Community Health shall be authorized to certify rural  
 34 hospitals as provided in subsection (d) of this Code section and shall adopt regulations to  
 35 implement its powers and duties under this Code section."

1 **SECTION 4.**

2 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.