

Senate Resolution 910

By: Senators Stokes of the 43rd, Balfour of the 9th, Polak of the 42nd, Tate of the 38th, Price of the 56th and Smith of the 25th

**ADOPTED SENATE**

A RESOLUTION

1 Creating the Senate Study Committee on the Future of Health Care in Georgia; and for other  
2 purposes.

3

4 WHEREAS, the accessibility of affordable and quality health care is crucial to the welfare  
5 of all citizens of Georgia; and

6

7 WHEREAS, numerous reports have pointed to a lack of coordination in the delivery of  
8 health care services, the disparity in availability of health care in certain areas of the state,  
9 and the increasing concern about the rising costs of prescription drugs, hospital services, and  
10 long-term care needs of the state's growing senior population; and

11

12 WHEREAS, the current system of health care services has demonstrated some shortcomings  
13 and a lack of long-term planning regarding the accessibility, efficiency, cost, financing, and  
14 effectiveness of the delivery of health care services; and

15

16 WHEREAS, the increasing diffusion of profitable, less acute health care services in a variety  
17 of freestanding facilities has left Georgia's community hospitals and academic medical  
18 centers with a growing concentration of severely ill patients requiring emergency, trauma  
19 care, and intensive care services which demand an extremely costly level of intensive  
20 resources in terms of skilled personnel and of expensive facilities and equipment; and

21

22 WHEREAS, there is a wide disparity in levels of charges for similar services provided by  
23 certain providers of inpatient and outpatient health services, which in turn affects the  
24 affordability of health care and its financial accessibility to all Georgians; and

25

26 WHEREAS, at the same time that the health care industry has grown more competitive,  
27 health care costs have risen sharply, and the health care industry has become increasingly  
28 dependent upon substantial federal and state financing for patient care services through

1 Medicare, Medicaid, and other governmental programs which require appropriate regulation;  
2 and

3  
4 WHEREAS, there are growing concerns in Georgia and nationally about the quality of  
5 surgical and diagnostic care and about patient safety at all levels of medical care; and

6  
7 WHEREAS, quality care and choice for all Georgians is dependent upon a continuing supply  
8 of well educated and trained physicians who will locate in all areas of the state, rural and  
9 urban, and such training is provided by certain community hospitals and academic medical  
10 centers located throughout Georgia; and

11  
12 WHEREAS, Georgia's rural hospitals face numerous funding crises threatening their  
13 viability, and such institutions are extremely vulnerable to freestanding surgical, diagnostic,  
14 and laboratory facilities that might selectively market only profitable patient services; and

15  
16 WHEREAS, it is important that all health care facilities throughout the state report levels of  
17 indigent and charity care in a consistent manner to ensure that all types of health care  
18 facilities are participating at an equitable level in the burden of providing uncompensated  
19 care for Georgians with limited financial resources; and

20  
21 WHEREAS, the number of uninsured Georgians continues to increase, stretching the  
22 resources available to provide quality health care; and

23  
24 WHEREAS, there are increasing concerns about the availability and quality and equality of  
25 trauma care throughout the state; and

26  
27 WHEREAS, the cost of malpractice insurance for hospitals and other health care providers  
28 threatens the availability of such insurance for many hospitals and other providers and may  
29 have a relationship to litigation involving health care providers, specifically including the  
30 size of awards and settlements in malpractice actions; and

31  
32 WHEREAS, the certificate of need regulatory program has been the principal mechanism for  
33 ensuring that all Georgians have access to quality, affordable, cost-effective health services  
34 and facilities; for protecting the financial viability of Georgia's safety net, teaching, and rural  
35 hospitals; and for limiting the unnecessary diffusion of complex health care services into low  
36 volume programs where quality concerns and costs might be increased; and the certificate  
37 of need program might be streamlined to achieve certain cost efficiencies; and

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

WHEREAS, a study of the issues related to the delivery of health care services is necessary to seek recommendations for needed improvements that will lead to better health, more consumer choice, and an improved quality of life for all citizens of Georgia.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE that there is created the Senate Study Committee on the Future of Health Care in Georgia to be composed of ten members of the Senate to be appointed by the President of the Senate. The President of the Senate shall designate a member of the committee as chairperson of the committee. The chairperson shall call all meetings of the committee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the committee shall undertake a study of the conditions, needs, issues, and problems mentioned above or related thereto and recommend any actions or legislation which the committee deems necessary or appropriate. The committee may conduct such meetings at such places and at such times as it may deem necessary or convenient to enable it to exercise fully and effectively its powers, perform its duties, and accomplish the objectives and purposes of this resolution. The members of the committee shall receive the allowances authorized for legislative members of interim legislative committees but shall receive the same for not more than seven days unless additional days are authorized. The funds necessary to carry out the provisions of this resolution shall come from the funds appropriated to the Senate. In the event the committee makes a report of its findings and recommendations, with suggestions for proposed legislation, if any, such report shall be made on or before December 31, 2002. The committee shall stand abolished on December 31, 2002.