

House Resolution 220

By: Representatives Watson of the 70th, Walker of the 141st, Orrock of the 56th, Smyre of the 136th, Stanley-Turner of the 50th and others

A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing "Community Health Centers Day"; and for other purposes.

2 WHEREAS, a large portion of the state's residents do not have access to affordable, quality
3 health care services, documented by the fact that over 1.3 million are uninsured and
4 numerous others underinsured, most of whom are the working poor who cannot pay the high
5 cost of health care; and

6 WHEREAS, 145 of Georgia's counties are designated as medically underserved areas while
7 133 counties are health professional shortage areas, including low-income neighborhoods of
8 the inner cities and nearly all of the rural counties; and

9 WHEREAS, Georgia mirrors the nation in disparities in health care outcomes in racial and
10 ethnic minority groups, including wide differences in average life span and health status for
11 infant mortality, cancer screening and management, cardiovascular disease, asthma, diabetes,
12 HIV infection/AIDS, and immunizations; and

13 WHEREAS, access to comprehensive primary health care services without regard to
14 financial means, cultural or ethnic heritage, or disease conditions has been shown to be most
15 effective in improving the health of all people; and

16 WHEREAS, federally funded community health centers are located in 60 of the state's
17 underserved communities, providing primary and preventive health care for 175,000 persons,
18 including the working poor, uninsured, low-income elderly, homeless, immigrants, and other
19 vulnerable populations; and

20 WHEREAS, the community health centers offer access to a wide range of cost-effective
21 primary and preventive medical and dental services, as well as health education, nutrition
22 counseling, prescription medicine, translation, community outreach, transportation, and
23 support programs without regard to the patient's ability to pay; and

1 WHEREAS, the health centers have a 30 year track record of controlling costs, providing
2 quality care, recruiting and retaining health professionals where they are most needed, and
3 empowering communities to develop long-range solutions to their health needs while
4 removing economic, cultural, geographic, and other barriers to adequate health care; and

5 WHEREAS, health centers serve as safety net providers in their communities, helping to
6 keep families from falling into poverty, while creating jobs and generating economic activity
7 in the economically depressed communities; and

8 WHEREAS, the cost-effectiveness of community health centers has been documented in
9 several studies which show that rates of emergency room visits and hospitalization are much
10 lower among health center patients than patients of other providers, and studies show that
11 community health centers cost the Georgia Medicaid program at least 20 percent less than
12 similar providers of primary health care; and

13 WHEREAS, community health centers are locally owned and operated by governing boards
14 composed of local community leaders and users of health center services who care about the
15 primary health care needs of their community and who are committed to working together
16 to make a difference; and

17 WHEREAS, the community health centers work in partnership with other health care
18 providers, hospitals, health departments, social service agencies, and health related
19 supportive services to maximize resources and assure that services are coordinated to
20 improve the health status of the community; and

21 WHEREAS, Georgia's community health centers and their state organization, the Georgia
22 Association for Primary Health Care, have committed to being the chief advocates of a
23 Georgia Campaign for 100% Access and Zero Disparities in health care outcomes among the
24 state's residents; and

25 WHEREAS, the community health centers deserve commendation for their outstanding
26 record of service and dedication to improving the health care and health status of all
27 Georgians.

28 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that
29 the members of this body recognize February 8, 2001, as "Community Health Centers Day."

- 1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized
- 2 and directed to transmit an appropriate copy of this resolution to the Georgia Association for
- 3 Primary Health Care.