

Senate Resolution 145

By: Senator Hooks of the 14th

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 as shown by the fact that over 1.3 million are uninsured, most of whom
4 are the working poor who cannot pay the high cost of health care, and numerous others are
5 underinsured; and

6 WHEREAS, 145 of Georgia's counties are designated as medically underserved areas
7 while 133 counties are health professional shortage areas. The problem ranges from the low-
8 income neighborhoods of the inner cities to the rural portions of the state; and

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

13 WHEREAS, access to comprehensive primary health care services without regard to income,
14 cultural or ethnic heritage, or disease conditions has been shown to be most effective in
15 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 and provide primary and preventive health care for 175,000
18 persons, including the working poor, uninsured, 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 and prescription medicines as well as
22 health education, nutrition counseling, 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 excellent health professionals where they are most
3 needed, and empowering communities to develop long range solutions to their health care
4 needs while removing economic, cultural, geographic, and other barriers to adequate health
5 care; and

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

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

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

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

22 WHEREAS, Georgia's community health centers and their state organization, the Georgia
23 Association for Primary Health Care, have committed to being the chief advocates of a
24 campaign for 100 percent access and zero disparities in health care outcomes among the
25 state's residents; and

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

29 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE that the members of this body
30 recognize these facts by designating February 8, 2001, as "Community Health Centers Day."

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