

House Resolution 111

By: Representatives Watson of the 60th, Post 2, Drenner of the 57th, Mosby of the 59th, Post 3, Jackson of the 124th, Post 1, Howell of the 92nd, and others

A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing Community Health Centers Day and inviting designated representatives of the
2 community health centers to appear before the House of Representatives; and for other
3 purposes.

4 WHEREAS, a large portion of the state's residents reside in federally designated medically
5 underserved areas and do not have access to affordable, quality health care services; and

6 WHEREAS, nearly 1.4 million people in the state are currently uninsured, most of whom are
7 the working poor who cannot pay the high cost of health care, and numerous others are
8 underinsured; and

9 WHEREAS, Georgia has significant disparities in health care outcomes in racial and ethnic
10 minority groups, including wide differences in average life span, infant mortality, cancer
11 screening and management, cardiovascular disease, asthma, diabetes, HIV infection/AIDS,
12 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 71 of the state's
17 underserved communities and provide primary and preventive health care for over 179,000
18 persons, including the working poor, uninsured, underinsured, elderly, homeless, immigrants,
19 and other 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 track record of over three decades of controlling costs,
2 providing quality care, recruiting and retaining excellent health professionals where they are
3 most needed, and empowering communities to develop long range solutions to their health
4 care needs while removing economic, cultural, geographic, and other barriers to adequate
5 health care; and

6 WHEREAS, the health centers, which bring over 23 million federal dollars per year to
7 Georgia communities, provide a major safety net and help to keep families from falling into
8 poverty while creating jobs and generating economic activity in the economically depressed
9 communities; and

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

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

19 WHEREAS, President George W. Bush has made expansion of community health centers
20 to 1,200 new communities nationwide a hallmark of his health care agenda and has proposed
21 doubling the federal investment in health centers over a five-year period, providing the
22 opportunity for expansion of health center services in Georgia; and

23 WHEREAS, Georgia's community health centers and their state organization, the Georgia
24 Association for Primary Health Care, support the President's expansion goals and have taken
25 a leadership role in helping to resolve the state's health care access problems, assure
26 continuous quality improvement, and reduce health care disparities among the underserved
27 through participation in the national health disparity collaboratives; and

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

1 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that
2 the members of this body recognize February 4, 2003, as Community Health Centers Day.

3 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that designated representatives of the community health
4 centers are invited to appear before the House of Representatives on such date and time as
5 designated by the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

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