

House Resolution 1039

By: Representatives Watson of the 60th, Post 2, Coleman of the 118th, Childers of the 13th, Post 1, Birdsong of the 104th, Smith of the 13th, Post 2, and others

A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing "Community Health Centers Day" and inviting designated representatives of
2 the 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 this state are currently uninsured, most of whom
7 are 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 75 of the state's
17 underserved communities and provide primary and preventive health care for over 190,000
18 persons, including the working poor, uninsured, underinsured, elderly, homeless, immigrants,
19 and other vulnerable populations; and

20 WHEREAS, the health centers, which bring over 24 million federal dollars per year to
21 Georgia communities, serve as major safety net providers, offering access to a wide range
22 of cost effective primary and preventive medical and dental services and prescription

1 medicines as well as health education, nutrition counseling, translation, community outreach,
2 transportation, and support programs without regard to the patient's ability to pay; and

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

8 WHEREAS, the cost effectiveness of community health centers has been documented in
9 several studies that show that rates of emergency room visits and hospitalization are much
10 lower among health care patients than patients of other providers, and studies that show that
11 community health centers cost Georgia's Medicaid program at least \$14.4 million per year
12 for care provided to medicare patients; and

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

17 WHEREAS, President George Bush has made expansion of community health centers to
18 1,200 new communities nationwide a hallmark of his health care agenda and has proposed
19 doubling the federal investment in health centers over a five-year period, providing the
20 opportunity for expansion of health center services in Georgia; and

21 WHEREAS, Georgia's community health centers and their state organization, the Georgia
22 Association for Primary Health Care, support the President's expansion goals and have taken
23 a leadership role in helping to resolve the state's health care access problems, assure
24 continuous quality improvement, and reduce health care disparities among the underserved
25 through participation in the national health disparity collaboratives; 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 HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that
30 the members of this body recognize February 5, 2004, as "Community Health Centers Day".

1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that designated representatives of the community health
2 centers are invited to appear before the House of Representatives at a date and time to be
3 designated by the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

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