

Senate Resolution 679

By: Senators Price of the 56th, Thomas of the 54th, Unterman of the 45th, Hooks of the 14th, Williams of the 19th and others

A RESOLUTION

- 1 Recognizing Community Health Centers Day; and for other purposes.
- 2 WHEREAS, a large portion of the state's residents reside in federally designated medically
3 underserved areas and do not have access to affordable, quality health care services; and
- 4 WHEREAS, nearly 1.4 million people in the state are currently uninsured, most of whom are
5 the working poor who may not be able to pay for their health care, and numerous others are
6 underinsured; and
- 7 WHEREAS, Georgia has significant disparities in health care outcomes in racial and ethnic
8 minority groups, including wide differences in average life span, infant mortality, cancer
9 screening and management, cardiovascular disease, asthma, diabetes, HIV infection/AIDS,
10 and immunizations; and
- 11 WHEREAS, access to comprehensive primary health care services has been shown to be
12 most effective in improving the health of all people; and
- 13 WHEREAS, federally funded community health centers are located in 75 of the state's
14 underserved communities and provide primary and preventive health care for over 190,000
15 persons, including the working poor, uninsured, underinsured, elderly, homeless, immigrants,
16 and other vulnerable populations; and
- 17 WHEREAS, the community health centers, which bring over \$24 million federal dollars per
18 year to Georgia communities, serve as major safety net providers offering access to a wide
19 range of cost-effective primary and preventive medical and dental services and prescription
20 medicines as well as health education, nutrition counseling, translation, community outreach,
21 transportation, and 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 cost effectiveness of community health centers has been documented in
7 several studies that show that rates of emergency room visits and hospitalization are much
8 lower among health center patients than patients of other providers, and that community
9 health centers in Georgia save the state Medicaid program at least \$14.4 million per year for
10 care provided to Medicaid patients; and

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

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

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

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

27 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE that the members of this body
28 recognize February 5, 2004, 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.