

House Bill 546

By: Representatives Beverly of the 143rd and Watson of the 166th

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Article 1 of Chapter 1 of Title 31 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated,
2 relating to general provisions relative to health, so as to require the Department of Public
3 Health to establish a pilot program to assess the need for and effectiveness of using protocol
4 technicians in areas of this state which do not have access to a hospital; to provide for
5 legislative findings; to provide for the design of the program; to provide for an advisory
6 council; to provide for a report; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and
7 for other purposes.

8 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

9 **SECTION 1.**

10 Article 1 of Chapter 1 of Title 31 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to
11 general provisions relative to health, is amended by adding a new Code section to read as
12 follows:

13 "31-1-14.

14 (a) The General Assembly finds that:

15 (1) Eight counties in Georgia do not have a hospital, and other counties in Georgia with
16 low-income populations have limited access to health care;

17 (2) Hospitals can establish protocols and train individuals as protocol technicians to go
18 into the community to assess body temperature, pulse rate, blood pressure, respiratory
19 rate, blood glucose level, and other vital signs of individuals in accordance with such
20 protocols; and

21 (3) In conducting such assessments, some health issues may be detected prior to the need
22 for the individuals to present at an emergency department.

23 (b) As used in this Code section, the term 'protocol technician' means an individual who
24 has been trained in medical terminology, health and safety techniques, medical law and
25 ethics, anatomy and physiology, general mathematics, and advanced clinical skills

26 necessary to conduct preventive care procedures, such as blood pressure and blood glucose
27 level assessments and weight management.

28 (c) No later than December 31, 2013, the department shall establish a pilot program to
29 determine the need for and assess the effectiveness of using protocol technicians in certain
30 areas of this state. In designing the pilot program and determining the county or counties
31 in which the pilot program will be established, the department shall consult with and take
32 input from the legislative delegations representing the eight counties in this state which do
33 not have a hospital, the Georgia Composite Medical Board, and the Department of
34 Community Health.

35 (d) The department shall establish an advisory council, composed of a physician, health
36 related manager, health educator, nurse practitioner or physician assistant, information
37 technology or health informatics specialist, and medical coding and billing specialist, to
38 assist and advise the department during the term of the pilot program and in formulating
39 the report provided for in subsection (f) of this Code section.

40 (e) The purpose of such pilot program shall be to determine whether using protocol
41 technicians to go into the community to assess body temperature, pulse rate, blood
42 pressure, respiratory rate, blood glucose level, and other vital signs of individuals in
43 accordance with established protocols in counties of this state which do not have a hospital
44 or in other areas which have limited access to a hospital would be effective and cost
45 efficient in providing care to unserved and underserved populations.

46 (f) No later than December 31, 2014, the department shall submit a detailed written report
47 on the implementation and results of the pilot program to the Governor, the Lieutenant
48 Governor, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives."

49 **SECTION 2.**

50 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.