

Senate Resolution 340

By: Senators Unterman of the 45th, Hill of the 32nd, Burke of the 11th and Hufstetler of the 52nd

ADOPTED SENATE

A RESOLUTION

1 Creating the Senate Study Committee on Independent Physician Practices in Georgia; and
2 for other purposes.

3 WHEREAS, the health of its citizens is of primary importance to the State of Georgia; and

4 WHEREAS, access to health care services and availability and affordability of health care
5 have a direct impact on the lives and well-being of the residents of this state; and

6 WHEREAS, independent physician practices in Georgia provide critical cost-effective
7 physician care in both a primary care and multiple specialty setting for a large percentage of
8 Georgia's population; and

9 WHEREAS, independent physician practices are shrinking in Georgia and nation-wide, with
10 a recent survey showing that by 2014, two-thirds of the nation's doctors will be employed by
11 hospitals; and

12 WHEREAS, removing existing barriers to the free market in health care would prevent the
13 continued decrease of the number of independent physicians practicing in this state; and

14 WHEREAS, a recent *Wall Street Journal* article tied a growing number of rate increases to
15 physician practice acquisitions, likely resulting in higher Medicaid spending and impacting
16 employers who are paying for workers' coverage; and

17 WHEREAS, it would be beneficial to study the current health care system in this state as it
18 is related to independent physician practices.

19 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE that there is created the Senate
20 Study Committee on Independent Physician Practices to be composed of four members of
21 the Senate to be appointed by the Lieutenant Governor. The Lieutenant Governor shall

22 designate a chairperson. The committee shall meet at the call of the chairperson from among
23 the appointees.

24 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the committee shall undertake a study of issues
25 surrounding independent physicians and whether state policies may be contributing to the
26 decline in the number of independent physicians in Georgia and what impact this decline
27 may have on the state's health care quality and costs. The committee may conduct such
28 meetings at such places and at such times as it may deem necessary or convenient to enable
29 it to exercise fully and effectively its powers, perform its duties, and accomplish the
30 objectives and purposes of this resolution. Legislative members of the committee shall
31 receive the allowances provided for in Code Section 28-1-8 of the Official Code of Georgia
32 Annotated. The allowances authorized by this resolution shall not be received by any
33 member of the committee for more than five days unless additional days are authorized. All
34 other funds necessary to carry out the provisions of this resolution shall come from funds
35 appropriated to the Senate.

36 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the committee shall make a report of its findings and
37 recommendations to the General Assembly and the Governor. The committee shall stand
38 abolished on January 1, 2014.