

House Bill 884

By: Representatives Cannon of the 58th, Schofield of the 63rd, Hugley of the 141st, Bennett of the 94th, and Smith of the 18th

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Chapter 2A of Title 31 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to the
2 Department of Public Health, so as to establish a grant program for perinatal facilities to
3 increase the availability of obstetric care in low access to maternity care areas and maternity
4 care deserts; to provide for definitions; to provide for appropriations and funding; to provide
5 for reporting; to provide for rules and regulations; to provide for related matters; to provide
6 for an effective date; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

7 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

8 **SECTION 1.**

9 Chapter 2A of Title 31 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to the Department
10 of Public Health, is amended by adding a new article to read as follows:

11 "ARTICLE 4

12 31-2A-70.

13 As used in this article, the term:

14 (1) 'Department' means the Department of Public Health.

15 (2) 'Low access to maternity care area' means a county in this state that has limited
16 access to maternity care services, as evidenced by having only one hospital or birth
17 center offering obstetric care, fewer than 60 obstetric providers per 10,000 births, or 10
18 percent or more reproductive aged women without health insurance.

19 (3) 'Maternity care desert' means a county in this state that has no hospitals or birth
20 centers offering obstetric care or no obstetric providers.

21 (4) 'Obstetric care' means the management of low-risk, moderate-risk, and high-risk
22 pregnancies, including labor, delivery, and the postpartum period.

23 (5) 'Obstetric provider' means a licensed obstetrician-gynecologist, a licensed family
24 physician who delivers babies, a certified nurse midwife, or a licensed nurse practitioner
25 who delivers babies.

26 (6) 'Perinatal facility' means a hospital, clinic, or birthing center that provides maternal
27 or neonatal healthcare services.

28 31-2A-71.

29 (a) The department shall establish a grant program for perinatal facilities in low access to
30 maternity care areas and maternity care deserts to use for:

31 (1) The recruitment and retention of obstetric providers;

32 (2) Facility upgrades of obstetric units that are related to obstetric care, equipment
33 purchases that are related to obstetric care, and the establishment of obstetric units; and

34 (3) Partnerships with larger medical centers to offer training, resources, and support for
35 obstetric care and obstetric providers.

36 (b) The department shall establish criteria, implement an application process, and award
37 grants consistent with the provisions of this Code section.

38 (c) The grant program established pursuant to this article shall be contingent upon the
39 appropriation of funds by the General Assembly for the purposes of this article in annual
40 appropriations Acts of the General Assembly.

41 31-2A-72.

42 (a) The department shall be authorized to accept donations, contributions, and gifts and to
43 receive, hold, and use grants, devises, and bequests of real, personal, and mixed property
44 on behalf of the state to enable the department to carry out the functions and purposes of
45 this article.

46 (b) The department shall be authorized to pursue federal funding opportunities and
47 collaborations with private entities, nonprofit organizations, and philanthropic
48 organizations to fund the grant program established pursuant to this article.

49 31-2A-73.

50 (a) The department shall prepare and submit an annual report to the Governor, the
51 President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the chairpersons
52 of the House Committee on Public Health and the Senate Committee on Health and Human
53 Services for distribution to its committee members. Such report shall evaluate the
54 effectiveness of the grant program established pursuant to this article, including indicating
55 the total number of perinatal facilities that applied for the grant program, the total number
56 of such facilities that were awarded grants, and the amount of each grant awarded to each
57 perinatal facility.

58 (b) The department shall biennially make recommendations to the General Assembly on
59 the continuation or discontinuation of the grant program established pursuant to this article
60 and improvements to such program in the annual report provided for in subsection (a) of
61 this Code section.

62 31-2A-74.

63 The department shall adopt such rules and regulations as are reasonable and necessary to
64 implement the provisions of this article."

65 **SECTION 2.**

66 This Act shall become effective upon its approval by the Governor or upon its becoming law
67 without such approval.

68 **SECTION 3.**

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