

House Bill 885

By: Representatives Cannon of the 58th, Schofield of the 63rd, Park of the 107th, Crawford of the 89th, 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 program to assist certain pregnant women
3 who reside in low access to maternity care areas and maternity care deserts in obtaining
4 obstetric care; to provide for definitions; to provide for appropriations and funding; to
5 provide for reporting; to provide for rules and regulations; to provide for related matters; to
6 provide 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.

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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 care provided throughout pregnancy and during labor, delivery,
23 and the postpartum period.

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

27 31-2A-71.

28 (a) The department, in coordination with the Department of Community Health and the
29 office of the Commissioner of Insurance, shall establish a program to assist pregnant
30 women who reside in low access to maternity care areas and maternity care deserts and
31 who are uninsured or underinsured in obtaining obstetric care and other related medical
32 services.

33 (b) The department shall establish criteria and standards for services and implement an
34 application process for pregnant women to apply for assistance and an approval process for
35 services consistent with the provisions of this Code section.

36 (c) The department shall be authorized to arrange, provide, pay in part or whole, or
37 reimburse in part or whole for:

38 (1) Obstetric care in a low access to maternity care area or maternity care desert;

39 (2) Mental health services during pregnancy and the postpartum period;

40 (3) Telehealth services for obstetric care or other related medical appointments;

41 (4) Transportation to and from appointments for obstetric care or other related medical
42 appointments; and

43 (5) Child care for when a pregnant woman is receiving obstetric care, mental health
44 services, or telehealth services or attending other related medical appointments.

45 (d) The department shall provide on its public website information about the program
46 provided for in this article.

47 (e) The program established pursuant to this article shall be contingent upon the
48 appropriation of funds by the General Assembly for the purposes of this article in annual
49 appropriations Acts of the General Assembly.

50 31-2A-72.

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

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

58 31-2A-73.

59 (a) The department shall prepare and submit an annual report to the Governor, the
60 President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the chairpersons
61 of the House Committee on Public Health and the Senate Health and Human Services
62 Committee for distribution to its committee members. Such report shall evaluate the
63 effectiveness of the program established pursuant to this article, including indicating the
64 total number of pregnant women who sought and obtained assistance through such
65 program, the total number of obstetric providers who participated in such program, the type

66 of assistance provided through such program, and the amount of money used for such
67 assistance.

68 (b) The department shall biennially make recommendations to the General Assembly on
69 the continuation or discontinuation of or improvements to the program established pursuant
70 to this article in the annual report provided for in subsection (a) of this Code section.

71 31-2A-74.

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

74 **SECTION 2.**

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

77 **SECTION 3.**

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