
HOUSE RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE CREATION OF A TEMPORARY TASK FORCE TO EXAMINE ALL
RELEVANT ISSUES THAT MAY CONTRIBUTE TO THE EXODUS OF
PHYSICIANS FROM HAWAII AND TO RECOMMEND WAYS TO RETAIN
PHYSICIANS IN THE STATE.

1 WHEREAS, there has been widespread coverage in the local
2 media that many of Hawaii's physicians, particularly
3 specialists, have chosen to leave the state for various reasons;
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6 WHEREAS, the Legislature is very much aware of this trend
7 and of the assertions that medical malpractice liability and
8 costly medical malpractice insurance premiums are contributing
9 to this trend; and

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11 WHEREAS, the issues of costly medical malpractice insurance
12 premiums and medical tort reform remain topics of serious,
13 extensive, and ongoing discussions within the Legislature; and

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15 WHEREAS, the Legislature is aware that additional,
16 significant reasons have been raised for the departure of
17 physicians from the state; and

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19 WHEREAS, for example, the State's geographic isolation as
20 the nation's only island state located in the middle of the
21 Pacific Ocean may act as a relative barrier to easy interstate
22 migration of professionals, including physicians; and

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24 WHEREAS, the high cost of living in the state affects
25 everyone, including physicians earning relatively higher
26 incomes; and

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28 WHEREAS, the issue of an alleged monopolistic underwriting
29 structure for reimbursement for physicians in the state has been
30 raised as a problem; and



1 WHEREAS, physicians and hospitals claim that the amounts
2 they are reimbursed for services, regardless of physician
3 network or health insurance plan, are below standard and thus
4 provide an incentive to seek work in another state; and
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6 WHEREAS, it is also alleged that physicians and hospitals
7 are often forced to treat indigent, uninsured, or underinsured
8 patients at a loss either because of low reimbursements or no
9 reimbursements at all; and
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11 WHEREAS, it is further alleged that Medicare and Medicaid
12 reimbursements are too low and do not allow physicians and
13 hospitals to either break even or earn a modest return for
14 providing their services; and
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16 WHEREAS, in 2006, the Legislative Reference Bureau
17 published "Medicaid and Quest Provider Payment and Reimbursement
18 Rates", which began the examination of adequate reimbursement to
19 providers for state-funded health care under Medicaid and Quest;
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22 WHEREAS, it is in the interest of the State to attain a
23 thorough understanding of all the issues and concerns that may
24 contribute to the exodus of physicians from Hawaii to better
25 fashion a comprehensive and effective solution; now, therefore,
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27 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
28 Twenty-fourth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular
29 Session of 2007, that the Governor, Speaker of the House of
30 Representatives, and Senate President are requested to convene a
31 temporary task force to examine all relevant issues that may
32 contribute to the exodus of physicians from Hawaii and to
33 recommend measures that may be taken to retain physicians in the
34 state; and
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36 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the temporary task force be
37 placed within the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs
38 for administrative purposes, including providing staff to take
39 minutes of meetings and supply other clerical support; and
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41 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Governor is requested to
42 appoint five members to the temporary task force; and
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1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Speaker of the House of
2 Representatives and the President of the Senate, jointly, are
3 requested to appoint four legislators and stakeholders to the
4 temporary task force; and

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6 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force convene no later
7 than July 1, 2007, and terminate on January 15, 2008; and

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9 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the temporary task force is
10 requested to:

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12 (1) Explore ways that the State can raise the overall
13 physician and hospital reimbursement rates for
14 services;
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16 (2) Research methods of raising Medicare and Medicaid
17 reimbursement rates for physician and hospital
18 services, including working with and fashioning
19 legislative initiatives with Hawaii's Congressional
20 delegation on the federal level; and
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22 (3) Recommend ways to retain physicians to work in the
23 state, particularly in rural and underserved areas;

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25 and

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27 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the temporary task force is
28 requested to submit its findings and recommendations, including
29 any necessary proposed legislation, to the Legislature no later
30 than 20 days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of
31 2008; and

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33 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
34 Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, President of the
35 Senate, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Director of
36 Human Services, Director of Commerce and Consumer Affairs,
37 Insurance Commissioner, and Director of Health who, in turn, are
38 requested to notify physicians and representatives of the health
39 insurance industry, mutual benefit societies, and health
40 maintenance organizations.

