
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;
4 and

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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

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32 WHEREAS, physicians and hospitals claim that the amounts
33 they are reimbursed for services, regardless of physician



1 network or health insurance plan, are below standard and thus
2 provide an incentive to seek work in another state; and
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4 WHEREAS, it is also alleged that physicians and hospitals
5 are often forced to treat indigent, uninsured, or underinsured
6 patients at a loss either because of low reimbursements or no
7 reimbursements at all; and
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9 WHEREAS, it is further alleged that Medicare and Medicaid
10 reimbursements are too low and do not allow physicians and
11 hospitals to either break even or earn a modest return for
12 providing their services; and
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14 WHEREAS, in 2006, the Legislative Reference Bureau
15 published *Medicaid and Quest Provider Payment and Reimbursement*
16 *Rates*, which began the examination of adequate reimbursement to
17 providers for state-funded health care under Medicaid and Quest;
18 and
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20 WHEREAS, it is in the interest of the State to attain a
21 thorough understanding of all the issues and concerns that may
22 contribute to the exodus of physicians from Hawaii to better
23 fashion a comprehensive and effective solution; now, therefore,
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25 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
26 Twenty-fourth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular
27 Session of 2007, that the Speaker of the House of
28 Representatives is requested to convene a temporary task force
29 to examine all relevant issues that may contribute to the exodus
30 of physicians from Hawaii and to recommend measures that may be
31 taken to retain physicians in the State; and
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33 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Speaker of the House of
34 Representatives is requested to appoint legislators and
35 stakeholders to the temporary task force; and
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37 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Speaker of the House of
38 Representatives is requested to convene the task force no later
39 than July 1, 2007, and to terminate the task force on
40 January 15, 2008; and
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42 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Speaker of the House of
43 Representatives is requested to direct the temporary task force
44 to:



- (1) Explore ways in which the State can raise the overall physician and hospital reimbursement rates for services;
- (2) Raise Medicare and Medicaid reimbursement rates for physician and hospital services, including working with and fashioning legislative initiatives with Hawaii's congressional delegation on the federal level; and
- (3) Recommend ways to retain physicians to work in the State, particularly in rural and underserved areas; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Speaker of the House of Representatives is requested to submit the temporary task force's findings and recommendations, including any necessary proposed legislation, to the Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2008; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Chairs of the House Committees on Human Services and Housing, and Health, the Director of Human Services, the Insurance Commissioner, and the Director of Health who, in turn, is requested to notify physicians and representatives of the health insurance industry, mutual benefit societies, and health maintenance organizations.

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