

1                   A bill to be entitled  
2           An act relating to the area health education center  
3           network; amending s. 381.0402, F.S.; requiring the  
4           Department of Health to cooperate with specified medical  
5           schools in maintaining and evaluating the network;  
6           expanding the purposes of the network; requiring the  
7           department to contract with the medical schools to provide  
8           funds to the network; providing that the persons to be  
9           served by the network are "medically underserved  
10          populations" rather than "low-income persons"; requiring  
11          that the network link the provision of primary care  
12          services to medically underserved populations with the  
13          education of medical students, interns, and residents,  
14          students in the health care professions, and health care  
15          providers serving medically underserved populations;  
16          amending s. 381.0405, F.S.; providing that the Office of  
17          Rural Health assume responsibility for state coordination  
18          of federal rural hospital and rural health care grant  
19          programs; deleting obsolete provisions; creating s.  
20          381.0409, F.S.; authorizing the department to coordinate  
21          with the Federal Government in carrying out certain  
22          activities relating to the recruitment and placement of  
23          health practitioners in medically underserved areas;  
24          providing an effective date.

25  
26   Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:  
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28 Section 1. Section 381.0402, Florida Statutes, is amended  
 29 to read:

30 381.0402 Area health education center network.--The  
 31 department, in cooperation with ~~the state-approved~~ medical  
 32 schools located in this state which form the area health  
 33 education center network in this state, shall maintain and  
 34 evaluate ~~organize~~ an area health education center network  
 35 focused based on earlier medically indigent demonstration  
 36 ~~projects and shall evaluate the impact of each network on~~  
 37 improving access to health services by persons who are medically  
 38 underserved. The network shall serve as ~~be~~ a catalyst for the  
 39 primary care training of health professionals by increasing  
 40 ~~through increased~~ opportunities for training in medically  
 41 underserved areas, increasing access to primary care services,  
 42 providing health workforce recruitment, enhancing the quality of  
 43 health care, and addressing current and emerging public health  
 44 issues.

45 (1) The department shall contract with the medical schools  
 46 to assist in funding the an area health education center  
 47 network, which links the provision of primary care services to  
 48 medically underserved populations ~~low-income persons~~ with the  
 49 education of:

50 (a) Medical students, interns, and residents. The network  
 51 shall:

52 (a) ~~Be coordinated with and under contract with the state-~~  
 53 ~~approved medical schools, which shall be responsible for the~~  
 54 ~~clinical training and supervision.~~

55 1.(b) Divide the state into service areas within the  
 56 network for ~~with each state-approved medical school~~ coordinating  
 57 the recruitment ~~recruiting~~, training, and retention of medical  
 58 students within its assigned area.

59 ~~(c) Use a multidisciplinary approach with appropriate~~  
 60 ~~medical supervision.~~

61 2.(d) Use ~~current~~ community resources, such as county  
 62 health departments, federally funded community or migrant health  
 63 ~~primary care~~ centers, and ~~or~~ other primary health care  
 64 providers, as ~~community-based~~ sites for training medical  
 65 students, interns, and residents.

66 3. Use a multidisciplinary approach with appropriate  
 67 medical supervision.

68 (b) Students in the health care professions. The network  
 69 shall:

70 1. Facilitate the recruitment, training, and retention of  
 71 students in the health care professions within service areas.

72 2. Use community resources, such as county health  
 73 departments, federally funded community or migrant health  
 74 centers, and other primary health care providers, as sites for  
 75 training students in the health care professions.

76 3. Use a multidisciplinary approach with appropriate  
 77 medical supervision.

78 (c) Health care providers serving medically underserved  
 79 populations. The network shall:

80 1. Assist providers in medically underserved areas and  
 81 other safety net providers in remaining current in their fields  
 82 through a variety of community resource initiatives.

83           2. Strengthen the health care safety net in this state by  
 84 enhancing services and increasing access to care in medically  
 85 underserved areas.

86           3. Provide other services, such as library and information  
 87 resources, continuing professional education, technical  
 88 assistance, and other support services, for providers who serve  
 89 in medically underserved areas.

90           (2) The department shall establish criteria and procedures  
 91 for quality assurance, performance evaluations, periodic audits,  
 92 and other appropriate safeguards for the network.

93           (3) The department shall make every effort to assure that  
 94 the network does ~~participating medical schools do~~ not  
 95 discriminate among enrollees with respect to age, race, sex, or  
 96 health status. However, the network ~~such schools~~ may target  
 97 high-risk medically needy population groups.

98           (4) The department may use no more than 5 percent of the  
 99 annual appropriation for administering and evaluating the  
 100 network.

101           Section 2. Paragraph (f) of subsection (4) of section  
 102 381.0405, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

103           381.0405 Office of Rural Health.--

104           (4) COORDINATION.--The office shall:

105           (f) Assume responsibility for state coordination of ~~the~~  
 106 ~~Rural Hospital Transition Grant Program, the Essential Access~~  
 107 ~~Community Hospital Program, and other federal~~ rural hospital and  
 108 rural health care grant programs.

109           Section 3. Section 381.0409, Florida Statutes, is created  
 110 to read:

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111           381.0409 Coordination with federal health professional  
112 recruitment and placement programs.--The department may  
113 coordinate with the Federal Government to designate health  
114 professional shortage areas and medically underserved areas, to  
115 recommend foreign physicians for visa waivers, to document  
116 health professionals working in the public interest, and to  
117 place health care professionals in medically underserved areas  
118 using federally funded recruitment incentive programs.

119           Section 4. This act shall take effect July 1, 2006.