

1 A bill to be entitled
 2 An act relating to community health workers; providing
 3 definitions; specifying the duties and activities of
 4 community health workers; creating the Community
 5 Health Worker Task Force within a state college or
 6 university; requiring the Department of Health to
 7 provide administrative support and services; providing
 8 membership and duties of the task force; requiring the
 9 members of the task force to elect a chair and vice
 10 chair; providing that task force members serve without
 11 compensation and are not entitled to reimbursement for
 12 per diem or travel expenses; requiring that the task
 13 force meet at least quarterly in person, by
 14 teleconference, or by other electronic means;
 15 specifying the number of members required for a
 16 quorum; requiring the task force to submit a report to
 17 the Governor and Legislature by a specified date;
 18 providing an effective date.

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 20 WHEREAS, Florida faces a number of challenges in providing
 21 access to health care services in both urban and rural areas
 22 which impair the health and well-being of state residents, and

23 WHEREAS, Florida continues to experience critical shortages
 24 of providers in primary health care, oral health care, and
 25 behavioral health care, particularly in rural and inner-city
 26 areas, and

27 WHEREAS, there is substantial evidence that comprehensive
 28 coordination of care for individuals who have chronic diseases

29 | and the provision of information regarding preventive care can
 30 | improve individual health, create a healthier population, reduce
 31 | the costs of health care, and increase appropriate access to
 32 | health care, and

33 | WHEREAS, community health workers have demonstrated success
 34 | in increasing access to health care in underserved communities,
 35 | providing culturally appropriate education regarding disease
 36 | prevention and management, providing translating and
 37 | interpreting services for health care encounters, improving
 38 | health outcomes through the coordination of care, increasing
 39 | individual health care literacy and advocacy, and organizing to
 40 | improve the health care of medically underserved communities
 41 | while reducing costs in the state's health care system, and

42 | WHEREAS, the Legislature recognizes that community health
 43 | workers are important members of the health care delivery system
 44 | in this state, and the Florida Health Worker Coalition has begun
 45 | to explore options that would allow community health workers to
 46 | earn a living wage and be part of an integrated health delivery
 47 | team, NOW, THEREFORE,

48 |
 49 | Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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 51 | Section 1. Community Health Worker Task Force.—

52 | (1) As used in this section, the term:

53 | (a) "Community health worker" means a front-line health
 54 | care worker who is a trusted member of or has an unusually close
 55 | understanding of the community that he or she serves and who:

56 | 1. Serves as a liaison, link, or intermediary between

57 health care services, social services, and the community in
58 order to facilitate access to health care services and improve
59 the quality of health care services and the cultural competency
60 of health care providers.

61 2. Performs the following activities in a community
62 setting:

63 a. Provides information regarding available resources.

64 b. Provides social support.

65 c. Advocates for individuals and their health care needs.

66 d. Provides services such as first aid and blood pressure
67 screening.

68 3. Builds individual and community capacity by increasing
69 knowledge regarding wellness, disease prevention, and self-
70 sufficiency through a range of activities, such as community
71 outreach and education and advocacy.

72 4. Collects data to help identify the health care needs in
73 a medically underserved community by:

74 a. Enhancing the communication skills of residents in
75 order to assist them in effectively communicating with health
76 care providers.

77 b. Providing culturally and linguistically appropriate
78 health or nutrition education.

79 c. Advocating for better individual and community health,
80 including oral health, mental health, and nutritional needs.

81 d. Providing referral services, followup services, and
82 coordination of care.

83 (b) "Department" means the Department of Health.

84 (c) "Medically underserved community" means a geographic

85 area that has a shortage of health care professionals and has a
86 population that includes persons who do not have public or
87 private health insurance, are unable to pay for health care, and
88 have incomes at or below 185 percent of the federal poverty
89 level.

90 (d) "Task force" means the Community Health Worker Task
91 Force established by the department under this section.

92 (2) (a) The department shall establish the Community Health
93 Worker Task Force within a state college or university. The
94 department shall provide administrative support and services to
95 the task force to the extent requested by the chair of the task
96 force and within available resources of the department.

97 (b) The task force shall consist of the following 12
98 members:

99 1. One member of the Senate appointed by the President of
100 the Senate.

101 2. One member of the House of Representatives appointed by
102 the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

103 3. One state official appointed by the Governor.

104 4. Six culturally and regionally diverse community health
105 workers appointed by the State Surgeon General.

106 5. Three representatives of the Florida Community Health
107 Worker Coalition appointed by the chair of the Florida Community
108 Health Worker Coalition.

109 (c) The task force shall develop recommendations for:

110 1. Including community health workers in the development
111 of proposals for health care or Medicaid reform in this state as
112 part of the outreach efforts for enrolling residents of this

113 state in Medicaid managed care programs or other health care
114 delivery services.

115 2. Including community health workers in providing
116 assistance to residents in navigating the health care system and
117 providing information and guidance regarding preventive health
118 care.

119 3. Providing support to community health centers and other
120 "safety net" providers through the integration of community
121 health workers as part of health care delivery teams.

122 (d) The task force shall also collaborate with the Florida
123 Community Health Worker Coalition, colleges and universities in
124 the state, and other organizations and institutions to recommend
125 a process that leads to the standardization of qualifications
126 and skills of community health workers who are employed in
127 state-supported health care programs.

128 (e) The members of the task force shall elect a chair and
129 vice chair.

130 (f) Members of the task force shall serve without
131 compensation and are not entitled to reimbursement for per diem
132 and travel expenses.

133 (g) The task force shall meet at least quarterly and may
134 meet at other times upon the call of the chair or as determined
135 by a majority of members. Meetings of the task force may be held
136 in person, by teleconference, or by other electronic means.

137 (h) A quorum shall consist of seven members, and the
138 concurring vote of a majority of the members present is required
139 for final action.

140 (i) The task force shall submit a report by June 30, 2014,

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141 | to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of
142 | the House of Representatives stating the findings, conclusions,
143 | and recommendations of the task force.

144 | Section 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.