

By the Committee on Health Policy; and Senator Braynon

588-03967-13

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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 and meet 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 for future repeal of the task force;
19 providing an effective date.

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

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

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

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

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

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

49
50 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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

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

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

57 1. Serves as a liaison, link, or intermediary between
58 health care services, social services, and the community in

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59 order to facilitate access to health care services and improve
60 the quality of health care services and the cultural competency
61 of health care providers.

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

64 a. Provides information regarding available resources.

65 b. Provides social support.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

85 (c) "Medically underserved community" means a geographic
86 area that has a shortage of health care professionals and has a
87 population that includes persons who do not have public or

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88 private health insurance, are unable to pay for health care, and
89 have incomes at or below 185 percent of the federal poverty
90 level.

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

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

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

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

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

104 3. One state official appointed by the Governor.

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

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

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

111 1. Including community health workers in the development of
112 proposals for health care or Medicaid reform in this state as
113 part of the outreach efforts for enrolling residents of this
114 state in Medicaid managed care programs or other health care
115 delivery services.

116 2. Including community health workers in providing

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117 assistance to residents in navigating the health care system and
118 providing information and guidance regarding preventive health
119 care.

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

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

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

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

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

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

141 (i) The task force shall submit a report by June 30, 2014,
142 to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of
143 the House of Representatives stating the findings, conclusions,
144 and recommendations of the task force.

145 (3) This section is repealed on December 1, 2014.

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