

By the Committee on Health Policy; and Senator Braynon

588-01761-14

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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 Florida College  
6 System institution or state university; requiring the  
7 Department of Health to provide administrative support  
8 and services; providing membership and duties of the  
9 task force; requiring the members of the task force to  
10 elect a chair and vice chair; providing that task  
11 force members serve without compensation and are not  
12 entitled to reimbursement for per diem or travel  
13 expenses; requiring that the task force meet at least  
14 quarterly; authorizing the task force members to meet  
15 in person or by teleconference or other electronic  
16 means; specifying the number of members required for a  
17 quorum; requiring the task force to submit a report to  
18 the Governor and the Legislature by a specified date;  
19 providing for future repeal of the task force;  
20 providing an effective date.

21  
22 WHEREAS, Florida continues to experience critical shortages  
23 of providers in primary health care, oral health care, and  
24 behavioral health care, particularly in rural and inner-city  
25 areas, and

26 WHEREAS, there is substantial evidence that comprehensive  
27 coordination of care for individuals who have chronic diseases  
28 and the provision of information regarding preventive care can  
29 improve individual health, create a healthier population, reduce

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30 the costs of health care, and increase appropriate access to  
31 health care, and

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

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

49 Section 1. Community Health Worker Task Force.—

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

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

54 1. Serves as a liaison, link, or intermediary between the  
55 health care services or social services and the community in  
56 order to facilitate access to health care services and improve  
57 the quality of health care services and the cultural competency  
58 of health care providers.

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- 59       2. Performs the following activities in a community  
60 setting:
- 61       a. Provides information regarding available resources.
  - 62       b. Provides social support.
  - 63       c. Advocates for individuals and their health care needs.
  - 64       d. Provides services, such as first aid and blood pressure  
65 screening.
- 66       3. Builds individual and community capacity to prevent  
67 disease and promote health by increasing knowledge regarding  
68 wellness, disease prevention, and self-sufficiency among the  
69 members of the community through a range of activities, such as  
70 community outreach, education, and advocacy.
- 71       4. Collects data to help identify the health care needs in  
72 a medically underserved community by:
- 73       a. Enhancing the communication skills of members of the  
74 community in order to assist them in effectively communicating  
75 with health care providers.
  - 76       b. Providing culturally and linguistically appropriate  
77 health or nutrition education.
  - 78       c. Advocating for better individual and community health,  
79 including oral health, mental health, and nutritional needs.
  - 80       d. Providing referral services, followup services, and  
81 coordination of care.
- 82       (b) "Department" means the Department of Health.
- 83       (c) "Medically underserved community" means a community in  
84 a geographic area that has a shortage of health care  
85 professionals and has a population that includes persons who do  
86 not have public or private health insurance, are unable to pay  
87 for health care, and have incomes at or below 185 percent of the

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88 federal poverty level.

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

91 (2) (a) The department shall establish the Community Health  
92 Worker Task Force within a Florida College System institution or  
93 state university. The department shall provide administrative  
94 support and services to the task force to the extent requested  
95 by the chair of the task force and within available resources of  
96 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. Nine culturally and regionally diverse community health  
105 workers appointed by the Surgeon General, three of whom are  
106 recommended by the chair of the Florida Community Health Worker  
107 Coalition.

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

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

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

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117 care.

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

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

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

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

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

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

139 (i) The task force shall submit a report by June 30, 2015,  
140 to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of  
141 the House of Representatives which states the findings,  
142 conclusions, and recommendations of the task force.

143 (3) This section is repealed December 1, 2015.

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