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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 279

Offered January 24, 2008

Commending the valuable work of Virginia's health safety net and its many private sector supporters.

Patrons—Hamilton, Athey, BaCote, Brink, Dance, Fralin, Hall, Janis, Landes, McClellan, Melvin, Moran, Morgan, Nixon, O'Bannon, Oder, Pogge, Shuler and Watts; Senators: Barker, Blevins, Deeds, Edwards, Hanger, Houck, Howell, Locke, Martin, Quayle, Reynolds, Ticer, Wampler and Whipple

WHEREAS, over 1,000,000 Virginians have no health insurance, despite the fact that 70 percent of them either work full-time or live in a household where at least one person works full-time, and another 13 percent work part-time; and

WHEREAS, 600,000 of these uninsured Virginians have incomes below 200 percent of the federal poverty level, which is \$41,300 annually for a family of four, and they cannot afford to purchase insurance, pay for medical or dental care, or fill prescriptions for needed medications; and

WHEREAS, many people end up going to hospital emergency rooms for care or putting off diagnosis and treatment until they are very sick, which adds to the growing uncompensated care costs in Virginia's overall health care system; and

WHEREAS, a health safety net of free clinics, community health centers, and other nonprofit outlets of health care has evolved in Virginia over the last 15 years, growing from 33 sites in 1992 to 184 sites serving virtually every area of Virginia in 2007; and

WHEREAS, in 2006 these safety net sites provided access to primary health care and a "medical home" to 153,000 uninsured Virginians, which is approximately 25 percent of the safety net population, and even more uninsured citizens were treated in safety net sites in 2007; and

WHEREAS, free clinics, community health centers, and the Virginia Health Care Foundation are the pillars of the Commonwealth's health safety net, and they work together to maximize the amount and quality of care available to Virginia's uninsured; and

WHEREAS, each of these important health care components substantially leverages non-state resources to fulfill their missions, with free clinics providing \$5.40 in health care for every dollar spent; community health centers providing 1,226 full-time jobs, resulting in an economic ripple effect of \$127 million; and the Virginia Health Care Foundation generating over \$11 in funds, health services, and other in-kind contributions for every dollar spent; and

WHEREAS, the total cash cost of operating Virginia's health safety net in 2006 was \$55.3 million, of which the Commonwealth provided only seven percent, and the rest came from the private sector, the federal government, and a number of localities; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend the hospitals, health care systems, brand name pharmaceutical companies, corporate leaders, local businesses, foundations, and generous individuals who provide financial support to Virginia's health safety net; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the General Assembly commend the more than 10,000 outstanding Virginians who selflessly volunteered in 2006 at Virginia's 50 free clinics, including 2,493 physicians, 589 dentists, 265 pharmacists, 169 mental health professionals, 213 nurse practitioners and physicians assistants, and 1,213 nurses; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the General Assembly commend the staff and boards of all of Virginia's health safety net organizations for their valuable contributions to health care, their compassion for patients, and their many efforts to strengthen and expand Virginia's health safety net; and, be it

RESOLVED FINALLY, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare copies of this resolution for presentation to the Virginia Association of Free Clinics, the Virginia Community Healthcare Association, and the Virginia Health Care Foundation as an expression of the General Assembly's gratitude for the commitment of their members and supporters to quality health care for all Virginians.

INTRODUCED

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