

By: Zaffirini

S.B. No. 56

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the creation of rural health centers.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Subchapter C, Chapter 487, Government Code, is amended by adding Section 487.059 to read as follows:

Sec. 487.059. RURAL HEALTH CENTERS. (a) In this section "rural county" has the definition assigned by Section 487.301.

(b) The office, with cooperation from the Texas Department of Health, the Health and Human Services Commission, the statewide rural health care system designated under Chapter 845, Insurance Code, and public health departments in rural counties, shall establish regional health centers in rural counties to coordinate the delivery of health care to residents of rural counties.

(c) Each agency listed in Subsection (b) shall provide services covered by programs of the agency to residents of rural counties from the regional health centers. Each agency shall contract with health care professionals to work from each regional health center to provide services to residents of the rural counties served by the center. Health care professionals providing services at a rural health center must be eligible to serve residents who are enrolled in federal and agency programs, including:

(1) the federal supplemental nutrition program for women, infants, and children under 42 U.S.C. Section 1786, as

1 amended;

2 (2) the state child health plan under Chapter 62,  
3 Health and Safety Code;

4 (3) the medical assistance program under Chapter 32,  
5 Human Resources Code; and

6 (4) the Medicare program.

7 (d) The office shall report to the legislature regarding the  
8 efficacy of rural health centers as part of the office's report to  
9 the legislature under Section 487.056.

10 SECTION 2. (a) Not later than January 1, 2004, the Office of  
11 Rural Community Affairs, after consulting with the Texas Department  
12 of Health, the Health and Human Services Commission, the statewide  
13 rural health care system, and public health departments in rural  
14 counties, shall choose three or four sites to serve as rural health  
15 centers as required by Section 487.059, Government Code, as added  
16 by this Act.

17 (b) The Office of Rural Community Affairs may designate  
18 additional sites as rural health centers if the office determines,  
19 as reported in its annual report delivered to the legislature on  
20 January 1, 2005, that the rural health centers are effective in  
21 coordinating health care services to residents of rural counties.

22 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect September 1, 2003.