

By: Delisi

H.C.R. No. 37

# CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1 WHEREAS, Federally funded health centers play a critical role  
2 in the delivery of health care and related services to residents who  
3 are not covered by health insurance or who reside in communities  
4 that lack traditional medical resources; the importance of these  
5 federal centers to the health of Texans cannot be overestimated;  
6 and

7 WHEREAS, More than 6 million Texans reside in federally  
8 designated health professional shortage areas and the federal  
9 government has identified 359 medically underserved areas and  
10 medically underserved populations in the Lone Star State; these  
11 areas and groups are characterized by a high percentage of elderly  
12 residents, high rates of poverty, high infant mortality, and a  
13 lower ratio of primary care providers than the national average;  
14 and

15 WHEREAS, The scarcity of medical care across so much of Texas  
16 and particularly in areas of such great need is compounded by the  
17 fact that, according to the United States Census Bureau, 24.6  
18 percent of the state's population is not covered by health  
19 insurance; consequently, many Texans are forced to seek preventive  
20 and primary care in hospital emergency rooms, straining already  
21 limited health care resources; and

22 WHEREAS, Further complicating the effective delivery of  
23 health care in Texas are the unique challenges stemming from the  
24 1,254 mile international border with the United Mexican States; the

1 32 county border region contains three of the 10 fastest growing  
2 metropolitan areas in the nation; currently home to more than two  
3 million Texans, estimates indicate that the population in the  
4 border region is growing at twice the rate of the state as a whole;  
5 and

6 WHEREAS, This incredible rate of population and accompanying  
7 industrial growth has occurred despite a severely limited municipal  
8 infrastructure; many border communities are plagued by inadequate  
9 drinking water and wastewater systems, unmanaged and illegal solid  
10 and hazardous waste sites, and poor air quality; as a result, the  
11 rate of waterborne diseases such as hepatitis A and amebiasis in the  
12 Texas counties bordering Mexico has been reported to be two to three  
13 times greater than the statewide average; in 2003, the rate of  
14 tuberculosis incidence per 100,000 in population was nearly twice  
15 that of non-border counties; and

16 WHEREAS, The condition of public health along the border is  
17 critical to that of the entire country; Mexico is the United States'  
18 second-largest trading partner and, according to the Center for  
19 Transportation Research at The University of Texas at Austin, 76  
20 percent of all U.S. trade with Mexico passes through Texas; in  
21 addition, as the second-leading agricultural producing state,  
22 Texas is a key component of the nation's food supply; and

23 WHEREAS, With more than 22 million residents, Texas also  
24 faces a number of other alarming public health issues, such as  
25 obesity, cardiovascular disease, and diabetes; in 2003, the Texas  
26 Department of Health reported that 39 percent of Texas fourth  
27 graders, 38 percent of eighth graders, and 61 percent of Texas

1 adults were overweight or obese; and

2 WHEREAS, Obesity-related medical conditions include birth  
3 defects, cancer, gallbladder disease, hypertension, cardiovascular  
4 disease, and type II diabetes, and overweight and obese individuals  
5 cost Texans \$10.5 billion in medical care and related costs in 2001;  
6 furthermore, cardiovascular disease is the number one killer in  
7 Texas, accounting for two out of every five deaths, and the Texas  
8 Diabetes Council estimates that more than one million adults in  
9 Texas have been diagnosed with diabetes and more than 500,000  
10 adults are believed to have undiagnosed diabetes; and

11 WHEREAS, Facilities such as federally qualified health  
12 centers (FQHC) and federally qualified health center look-alikes  
13 (FQHC look-alikes) as well as programs operated by the Health  
14 Resources Services Administration and the Centers for Disease  
15 Control and Prevention are specifically designed to provide primary  
16 and preventive care to underserved areas and to meet many of the  
17 distinct public health needs facing Texas; better interagency  
18 coordination and increased federal resources would greatly enhance  
19 ongoing prevention, detection, and treatment efforts by the State  
20 of Texas; and

21 WHEREAS, Texas' growing population, demographic diversity,  
22 and a border with the United Mexican States present unique  
23 challenges to providing quality health care to its citizens; as a  
24 buffer to the remainder of the United States against infectious  
25 disease and contamination of the country's food supply, the State  
26 of Texas merits additional resources to provide for the health of  
27 its residents and, ultimately, to safeguard the health of the

1 entire United States; now, therefore, be it

2       RESOLVED, That the 79th Legislature of the State of Texas  
3 hereby respectfully urge the United States Congress, the Centers  
4 for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Health Resources and  
5 Services Administration to increase the presence of federal health  
6 and human services agencies in Texas, improve coordination of  
7 federal programs in Texas, and increase the amount of federal  
8 resources available to Texas; and, be it further

9       RESOLVED, That the Texas secretary of state forward official  
10 copies of this resolution to the president of the United States, the  
11 speaker of the house of representatives and the president of the  
12 senate of the United States Congress, and all members of the Texas  
13 delegation to the congress with the request that this resolution be  
14 officially entered in the Congressional Record as a memorial to the  
15 Congress of the United States of America and that copies also be  
16 forwarded to the secretary of the United States Department of  
17 Health and Human Services, the director of the Centers for Disease  
18 Control and Prevention, and the administrator of the Health  
19 Resources and Services Administration.