

By: Nelson

S.C.R. No. 1

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1 WHEREAS, As the largest of the 48 contiguous states and  
2 ranking second only to California in terms of population, the State  
3 of Texas faces unique challenges to providing adequate access to  
4 primary health care for its residents; and

5 WHEREAS, As of September 2006, 113 Texas counties, home to  
6 more than 3 million Texans, were designated as primary care health  
7 professional shortage areas by the United States Department of  
8 Health and Human Services; under related federal standards, an even  
9 larger portion of the state qualifies as medically underserved,  
10 with 177 entire Texas counties and parts of 47 other counties  
11 receiving that designation; and

12 WHEREAS, Working through a cooperative agreement with the  
13 federal Health Resources and Services Administration, the Texas  
14 Primary Care Office has as its mission the improvement of access to  
15 medical, dental, and mental health care services for the state's  
16 underserved populations by recruiting and retaining primary care  
17 providers to practice in federally designated shortage areas; and

18 WHEREAS, Similarly, the federal National Health Service  
19 Corps (NHSC) works with educational institutions, students,  
20 professional organizations, clinicians, and underserved  
21 communities around the nation to deliver primary health care,  
22 including dental, mental, and behavioral health care, by developing  
23 innovative solutions to improve recruitment, preparation, and  
24 retention of health professionals; and

1           WHEREAS, The NHSC Ambassador Program seeks to accomplish  
2 these goals by engaging university- and community-based volunteers  
3 to link students and clinicians with employment opportunities in  
4 underserved communities that match their career interests, to  
5 prepare and train students and clinicians to work in health  
6 professional shortage areas by connecting them to clinical  
7 rotations, and to mentor students and clinicians with one-on-one  
8 counseling to maintain interest and commitment to serving the  
9 underserved; and

10           WHEREAS, Although the Texas Primary Care Office is the Texas  
11 liaison with the NHSC, currently there is no formal connection  
12 between the office and the NHSC Ambassador Program; clearly, the  
13 state would benefit from a coordination of effort between the  
14 program and the primary care office, bringing much-needed  
15 additional resources to the areas of Texas that remain underserved  
16 by health care professionals; now, therefore, be it

17           RESOLVED, That the 80th Legislature of the State of Texas  
18 hereby encourage the National Health Services Corps Ambassador  
19 Program to coordinate with the Primary Care Office at the Texas  
20 Department of State Health Services; and, be it further

21           RESOLVED, That the Texas secretary of state forward an  
22 official copy of this resolution to the secretary of the United  
23 States Department of Health and Human Services, the chair of the  
24 National Advisory Council on the National Health Services Corps,  
25 and the commissioner of the Texas Department of State Health  
26 Services.