

1-1 By: Watson S.C.R. No. 28
1-2 (In the Senate - Filed February 27, 2007; March 7, 2007,
1-3 read first time and referred to Committee on Health and Human
1-4 Services; March 26, 2007, reported adversely, with favorable
1-5 Committee Substitute by the following vote: Yeas 9, Nays 0;
1-6 March 26, 2007, sent to printer.)

1-7 COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR S.C.R. No. 28 By: Nelson

1-8 SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1-9 WHEREAS, In 2000, more than two million senior citizens lived
1-10 in Texas, and it is estimated that by 2020 the number of Texans over
1-11 the age of 65 will increase to approximately 3.4 million; and

1-12 WHEREAS, With average life expectancy continuing to rise, the
1-13 considerable costs associated with caring for the elderly are a
1-14 major concern for policy makers nationwide; the Centers for
1-15 Medicare and Medicaid estimates that in 2004 Texans spent \$5.590
1-16 billion for nursing home care and \$3.626 billion for home health
1-17 care, more than one-third of which was paid for using public funds;
1-18 and

1-19 WHEREAS, Further complicating the issue of elder care is the
1-20 fact that seniors are increasingly choosing to live in their own
1-21 homes for as long as possible; this trend toward "aging in place"
1-22 requires significant changes in the methods of delivery in health
1-23 care, social services, and support systems for the elderly; and

1-24 WHEREAS, Addressing the challenges that "aging in place"
1-25 presents for monitoring the health and welfare of the elderly has
1-26 prompted practitioners and policy makers to consider alternative
1-27 solutions that may be provided by advances in technology,
1-28 especially in delivering services to seniors who live in rural
1-29 areas and are often required to drive substantial distances to
1-30 visit medical providers; and

1-31 WHEREAS, Advances in telecommunications, such as
1-32 high-quality imaging and interactive real-time video, have
1-33 significantly improved access to advanced health care; these
1-34 telemedicine/telehealth services are not only medically
1-35 efficacious but also cost-effective if impediments to the expanded
1-36 use of these technologies in current Medicare regulations are
1-37 removed; and

1-38 WHEREAS, Requirements under the Medicare, Medicaid, and
1-39 SCHIP Benefits Improvement and Protection Act of 2000 severely
1-40 limit Medicare reimbursement of telemedicine/telehealth services,
1-41 prohibiting the use of certain telecommunications techniques and
1-42 restricting payments to hub-site providers; expanding the types of
1-43 telemedicine/telehealth technologies that are eligible for
1-44 reimbursement under the Medicare program would reduce the need for
1-45 expensive inpatient chronic care and foster the development of
1-46 improved telemedicine/telehealth capabilities in skilled nursing
1-47 facilities, lessening the burden and expense of transporting sick
1-48 and frail elderly patients to and from various health care
1-49 providers; and

1-50 WHEREAS, Federal legislation to revise
1-51 telemedicine/telehealth reimbursement requirements under Medicare
1-52 was filed as recently as 2005 during the 109th Congress, and with
1-53 the expected increase in the senior citizen population in Texas, it
1-54 is appropriate that the Texas congressional delegation support
1-55 current efforts to expand Medicare-covered telemedicine/telehealth
1-56 services; now, therefore, be it

1-57 RESOLVED, That the 80th Legislature of the State of Texas
1-58 hereby respectfully urge the Texas congressional delegation to
1-59 support federal legislation requiring the Centers for Medicaid and
1-60 Medicare Services to take substantive and affirmative actions to
1-61 expand telemedicine/telehealth services, especially the initiation
1-62 of Medicare reimbursement for telemedicine/telehealth home health
1-63 services in home health care and in skilled nursing facilities;

2-1 and, be it further
2-2 RESOLVED, That the Texas secretary of state forward official
2-3 copies of this resolution to the president of the United States, the
2-4 speaker of the house of representatives and the president of the
2-5 senate of the United States Congress, and all members of the Texas
2-6 delegation to the congress with the request that this resolution be
2-7 officially entered in the Congressional Record as a memorial to the
2-8 Congress of the United States of America.

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