

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, During the transition from childhood to adulthood, adolescents often fail to receive regular primary health care screenings and treatment that could greatly improve their current and future health; and

WHEREAS, Many adolescents are adversely affected by serious health and safety issues, such as motor vehicle crashes, violence, and substance abuse; they also struggle to adopt behaviors that could decrease their risk of developing chronic diseases in adulthood--behaviors such as eating nutritiously, engaging in physical activity, and choosing not to use tobacco; a number of environmental factors, such as family, peer group, school, and community characteristics, contribute to the challenges that adolescents face; and

WHEREAS, Adolescence is a critical time for developing positive habits and skills that can lead to healthy behaviors over an individual's lifetime; the Institute of Medicine and the National Research Council conducted a study that found that one important factor in designing an adolescent health service is the focus on prevention of disease; one of the conclusions of the study was the "prevention, early intervention and timely treatment improve the health status for adolescents, prepare them for healthy adulthood, and decrease the incidence of many chronic diseases in adulthood"; and

1           WHEREAS, In the past few years, immunizations have been  
2 licensed to provide protection for teens against such illnesses as  
3 meningococcal infections, pertussis, or whooping cough, and  
4 cervical cancer; the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices  
5 specifically recommends the use of FDA-approved vaccines for  
6 pertussis, tetanus, and meningitis, in adolescents; a national  
7 survey conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
8 (CDC) found, however, that immunization coverage levels among  
9 adolescents in 2006 failed to meet the Healthy People 2010  
10 objective of 90 percent coverage for youth aged 13 through 15 for  
11 any of the vaccines measured; and

12           WHEREAS, Numerous organizations have emphasized the  
13 importance of routine screenings and inoculations in promoting the  
14 health of adolescents; the Society for Adolescent Medicine has  
15 found that adolescent well physicals are one of the most effective  
16 of preventive care tools for ensuring continued health from  
17 childhood to adulthood and that adolescents who regularly visit a  
18 primary care physician are less likely to visit emergency rooms and  
19 have preventable hospitalizations and are more likely to receive  
20 recommended immunizations and other evidence-based health care  
21 services; and

22           WHEREAS, The Texas Department of State Health Service (DSHS)  
23 is the agency responsible for the implementation of the Adolescent  
24 Health Program, which maintains a comprehensive and holistic view  
25 of adolescents' health and well-being and provides information on  
26 adolescent health through consultation, technical assistance, and  
27 educational presentations to local, state, public, and private

1 agencies; in addition, DSHS is the agency that houses the Texas  
2 Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity Prevention Program, the  
3 Texas Asthma Control Program, the Immunization Branch, and the  
4 School Health Program, all of which have a significant, positive  
5 impact on the health and well-being of adolescent Texans; and

6         WHEREAS, The Texas Education Agency (TEA) provides education  
7 to children and parents about healthy practices and behaviors  
8 through the curriculum it requires for health, fitness, and life  
9 skills courses, as well as through the activity of the TEA Division  
10 of Health and Safety, which provides coordination, leadership,  
11 policy development, and implementation assistance for specific  
12 state and federal requirements and programs that emphasize  
13 providing students with opportunities to achieve their maximum  
14 potential for a safe and healthy lifestyle; and

15         WHEREAS, Additionally, the Health Resources and Services  
16 Administration of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
17 has developed, in conjunction with the American Academy of  
18 Pediatricians, the Bright Futures initiative, which provides a set  
19 of guidelines for adolescent care, including recommendations on  
20 immunizations and routine health screenings; for its part, the CDC  
21 has launched a national campaign to raise awareness about  
22 adolescent health and immunizations; and

23         WHEREAS, Parents' awareness of the need for adolescent well  
24 visits is a crucial factor in determining whether their children  
25 receive routine health care and preventive treatment; now,  
26 therefore, be it

27         RESOLVED, That the 81st Legislature of the State of Texas

1 hereby express its support of efforts to improve adolescent health  
2 by educating parents about the fundamental importance of  
3 adolescents' receiving regular physical exams and updated  
4 immunizations; and, be it further

5         RESOLVED, That the legislature direct the Texas Department of  
6 State Health Services and the Texas Education Agency and all other  
7 state agencies that provide information, services, or support to  
8 adolescent Texans or their parents to seek out opportunities to  
9 educate them as to the importance of these exams and of acquiring  
10 recommended immunizations and the positive impact that these  
11 measures will have on adolescents' long-term health and well-being;  
12 and, be it further

13         RESOLVED, That the Texas secretary of state forward an  
14 official copy of this resolution to the commissioner of the Texas  
15 Department of State Health Services and the commissioner of  
16 education.