

By: Quintanilla

H.R. No. 418

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, The West Texas Area Health Education Center Program
2 has improved access to health care in more than 100 counties through
3 the education and development of the medical workforce; and

4 WHEREAS, West Texas is one of the most medically underserved
5 regions in the United States; with a predominantly rural population
6 of approximately 2.8 million people, it encompasses a land mass
7 larger than all but four of the states; 64 of its counties have been
8 designated as Health Professions Shortage Areas, and another 15
9 have a partial county or population HPSA designation; the West
10 Texas Area Health Education Center Program, since its founding in
11 2002, has sought to address the health care provider shortage by
12 increasing the number of future rural health care providers and
13 supporting the retention of professionals currently practicing;
14 and

15 WHEREAS, Established by the Texas Tech University Health
16 Sciences Center, F. Marie Hall Institute of Rural and Community
17 Health, the West Texas Area Health Education Center Program
18 coordinates the efforts of educational institutions, health care
19 providers, communities, and counties; the program's five centers,
20 located in Abilene, Amarillo, El Paso, Midland, and Plainview, are
21 hosted by local organizations in partnership with the Texas Tech
22 University Health Sciences Center; they belong to a national
23 network of Area Health Education Centers, which was created by
24 Congress in 1971 to enhance access to quality health care,

1 particularly primary and preventive care, by recruiting, training,
2 and retaining health care professionals for communities with
3 critical needs; and

4 WHEREAS, Because young people raised in underserved settings
5 are more likely than others to consider practicing in such a
6 setting, the West Texas Area Health Education Center Program
7 educates local schoolchildren about careers in the medical field,
8 prepares them for these opportunities and encourages their
9 progress, and conducts targeted outreaches to minorities, now
10 underrepresented in the health care professions; its
11 community-based clinical training programs introduce health care
12 professions students to underserved communities while enhancing
13 the ability of those communities to recruit new professionals; in
14 addition, the West Texas Area Health Education Center Program
15 provides health needs assessment and planning, coalition building,
16 and strategic prioritization to avert future personnel shortages
17 and to ensure that the current workforce is well trained; and

18 WHEREAS, Improved access to high-quality health care
19 strengthens communities, and the West Texas Area Health Education
20 Center Program has greatly benefited quality of life and economic
21 development in the region; now, therefore, be it

22 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 82nd Texas
23 Legislature hereby honor the West Texas Area Health Education
24 Center Program for its outstanding contributions in behalf of the
25 residents of West Texas and extend to all those associated with the
26 program sincere best wishes for continued success in their vital
27 endeavors; and, be it further

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1 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be
2 prepared for the West Texas Area Health Education Center Program as
3 an expression of high regard by the Texas House of Representatives.