

Assembly Joint Resolution No. 13

RESOLUTION CHAPTER 85

Assembly Joint Resolution No. 13—Relative to health care.

[Filed with Secretary of State September 6, 2011.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AJR 13, Lara. Graduate medical education.

This measure would urge the President and the Congress of the United States to continue to provide resources to increase the supply of physicians in California and to consider solutions that would increase the number of graduate medical education residency positions.

WHEREAS, Congress approved, and President Barack Obama signed, the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) of 2010 (Public Law 111-148), to expand health insurance coverage, reduce health care costs, and address the growing shortage of physicians; and

WHEREAS, The PPACA aims to specifically address shortages in primary care through adjustments to the Medicare and Medicaid fee schedules, reallocation of unused graduate medical education slots, and a suite of grants, scholarships, loans, and loan forgiveness programs; and

WHEREAS, Forty-two of California's 58 counties fall below the Council on Graduate Medical Education's recommendations for minimum primary care physician supply, and of these 42 counties, 16 have a Latino population that exceeds 30 percent; and

WHEREAS, The PPACA encourages more physicians to practice in rural settings, where Latinos can constitute 50 percent of the population, through Rural Physician Training Grants for medical schools; and

WHEREAS, California's rural counties suffer from particularly low physician practice rates, of the rural counties with the lowest number of primary care physicians, three have a Latino population over 50 percent; and

WHEREAS, The PPACA endeavors to create a more diverse and culturally competent physician workforce by funding scholarships, educational assistance, and loan repayment programs for minority medical students, as well as by building diversity training curricula for medical schools and continuing medical education programs; and

WHEREAS, California is a diverse state that demands a culturally competent and multiethnic physician workforce. According to the 2010 Census, of the state's residents 40 percent are non-Hispanic White, 38 percent are Hispanic, 13 percent are Asian, 6 percent are African American, 3 percent are multiracial, and approximately 1 percent are American Indian; and

WHEREAS, Currently Latinos, African Americans, Samoans, Cambodians, Hmong, and Laotians are underrepresented in California's physician workforce. The underrepresentation of Latino physicians is particularly dire: Latinos represent over one-third of the state's population, but account for only 5 percent of the state's physicians; and

WHEREAS, The majority of the state's ethnic communities enjoys a ratio of 361 physicians per 100,000 residents, but African American communities have only 178 physicians per 100,000 residents and Latino communities have only 56 physicians per 100,000 residents; and

WHEREAS, The number of physicians retiring currently outpaces the number of physicians entering the workforce in California, where, in the last 15 years, the number of medical school graduates in California has been at a plateau even though there has been a population growth in the state of 20 percent; and

WHEREAS, The magnitude of this physician shortage will only increase the cost of public health care in the health care institutions of the state given that Latinos will constitute the majority of Californians by the year 2040. Currently, to reach parity with the non-Latino patient population, there would need to be approximately 27,309 more Latino physicians in California; and

WHEREAS, The PPACA reforms graduate medical education by expanding the scope of Medicare-recognized patient care settings, creating funding for community-based graduate medical education training, and establishing Teaching Health Centers development grants; and

WHEREAS, The increase of medical school debt is one of the primary factors for a student not to pursue medical school because the average medical student now graduates with about \$150,000 in debt. If that trend continues at the average rate, medical school debt will amount to \$750,000 by 2033; and

WHEREAS, It was reported that in 2009 there were over 45,500 applications to California's eight medical schools but that these schools only offered a total of 1,084 spots; and

WHEREAS, The primary bottleneck in the United States' physician training pipeline is at residency. California is host to 12 percent of the United States' population, but only has 8.3 percent of the country's medical residents. This means that in 2008, California had 9,200 medical residents, which was significantly below the national average; and

WHEREAS, California is able to meet only 25 percent of its current physician workforce needs with physicians who undergo graduate medical education in-state; and

WHEREAS, The PPACA demonstrates an ongoing commitment to evaluation and assessment of the physician workforce by establishing the National Health Care Workforce Commission, Centers for Health Care Workforce Analysis at the national, state, and regional levels, and funding state health care workforce development grants; and

WHEREAS, The expansion of health insurance coverage under the PPACA will further increase the need for physicians. Nearly 4.7 million

nonelderly adults and children who were uninsured in all or part of 2009 will qualify for coverage under the PPACA; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly and the Senate of the State of California, jointly, That the Legislature urges the President and the Congress of the United States to continue to provide resources to increase the supply of physicians in California, in order to improve access to care, particularly for Californians in rural areas and members of underrepresented ethnic groups; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature encourages the President and the Congress of the United States to consider solutions that would increase the number of graduate medical education residency positions to keep pace with the growing numbers of medical school graduates and the growing need for physicians in California and the United States; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the President and Vice President of the United States, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, to the Majority Leader of the Senate, to each Senator and Representative from California in the Congress of the United States, and to the author for appropriate distribution.