



1 HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The percentage of Illinoisans without health care
3 coverage has generally been rising for the last 15 years,
4 growing from 9.7% in 1987 to 14.1% in 2002 and nationally the
5 proportion of the population that is uninsured grew by 17.8%
6 between 1987 and 2002, but it grew by 45.5% in Illinois; and

7 WHEREAS, Residents of rural areas face a difficult time in
8 accessing health care due to geographic isolation, lack of
9 transportation, economic disparity, and seasonal challenges
10 which create obstacles for rural health care consumers; and

11 WHEREAS, More than 20% of the U.S. population, over 65
12 million people, live in rural areas, and yet, only 9% of
13 physicians practice in rural areas; and

14 WHEREAS, Rural health care providers face financial
15 barriers, including lower wages and reimbursement rates
16 compared to urban counterparts, lower patient volumes, and
17 fewer economies of scale; and

18 WHEREAS, The elderly are disproportionately represented in
19 rural areas, with approximately 18.4% of all rural residents
20 being elderly, and Medicare is the dominant source of health
21 care reimbursements for rural hospitals, accounting for
22 approximately 47% of patient care in rural areas, compared to
23 36% in urban areas; and

24 WHEREAS, In rural areas persons with disabilities and
25 others who need specialized care must overcome the added
26 difficulties of lack of public transportation, long distance to
27 health care providers, and limited support services;
28 therefore, be it

29 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE

1 NINETY-THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, THE
2 SENATE CONCURRING HEREIN, that the Joint Task Force on Rural
3 Health is hereby created comprised of 8 members as follows: 2
4 members of the Senate appointed by the Senate President, 2
5 members of the Senate appointed by the Senate Minority Leader,
6 2 members of the House of Representatives appointed by the
7 Speaker of the House and 2 members of the House of
8 Representatives appointed by the House Minority Leader, with
9 one member appointed by the Senate President serving as
10 co-chairperson and one member appointed by the Speaker of the
11 House serving as co-chairperson; and be it further

12 RESOLVED, That the Task Force shall meet to study issues of
13 importance for improving access to quality, affordable health
14 care for all residents of Illinois, particularly those that
15 reside in a rural setting; and be it further

16 RESOLVED, That the Task Force shall study issues related to
17 the best practices which ensure that an adequate and
18 well-trained workforce is available to deliver health care
19 services to Illinois residents living in rural communities; and
20 be it further

21 RESOLVED, That the Illinois Rural Health Association shall
22 provide expert technical assistance to the Task Force as the
23 Task Force deems necessary; and be it further

24 RESOLVED, That the Task Force shall present its findings
25 and recommendations on how best to improve health care in rural
26 communities to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of
27 the House no later than January 1, 2005.