



A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY OF HEALTH CARE WORKFORCE NEEDS AND STRATEGIES FOR MEETING THOSE NEEDS.

WHEREAS, the health and welfare of all Montanans depends on their access to health care providers and health care services; and

WHEREAS, a well-trained and well-educated health care workforce is critical to the health and well-being of Montanans and the Montana economy; and

WHEREAS, 54 of Montana's 56 counties are designated in whole or in part as health professional shortage areas, medically underserved areas, or medically underserved populations; and

WHEREAS, the population of Montana is projected to grow 21% between 2000 and 2020, resulting in a corresponding increase in the demand for health care professionals; and

WHEREAS, access to medical treatment is threatened in many communities, particularly those in rural and frontier areas, due to a lack of health care providers, such as dentists, physicians, physician assistants, and advanced practice registered nurses; and

WHEREAS, the Montana physician workforce ranks second nationwide in the number of physicians over age 65, less than 25% of physicians practice outside of the state's 7 largest cities, and 8 of the 56 counties have no physician; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration projects that Montana will have 3,000 fewer registered nurses than needed by 2020; and

WHEREAS, many communities, especially those in rural and frontier areas, also report a shortage of and an aging workforce of allied health care professionals, including laboratory technicians, medical technicians, and other health professionals; and

WHEREAS, the health care sector provides highly paid, highly skilled careers in large and small communities across the state and is critically important to the state's economic growth; and

WHEREAS, the state lacks a comprehensive strategy for developing the supply of health care

professionals necessary to meet the future medical needs of Montana.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

That the Legislative Council be requested to designate an appropriate interim committee, pursuant to section 5-5-217, MCA, to:

- (1) examine Montana's health care workforce needs by:
  - (a) reviewing existing analyses of Montana's current health care workforce;
  - (b) reviewing projections related to future health care workforce trends and needs; and
  - (c) monitoring the ongoing work and final recommendations of the state entities that have received a federal Health Care Workforce Development Planning Grant to consider the state's long-term needs for health care workers;
- (2) in order to ensure that the supply of health care professionals and health care workers is adequate to meet the projected demand, recommend a comprehensive 10-year plan for expanding health care professions and health care workforce training programs in a manner that incorporates the recommendations of state and national entities that have been reviewing and considering workforce needs; and
- (3) develop legislative proposals to begin implementation of the 10-year health care workforce development plan for consideration by the 63rd Montana Legislature.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the study consider and that the 10-year health care workforce development plan address ways to:

- (1) develop public-private partnerships to expand workforce training opportunities;
- (2) expand health care workforce training opportunities through the Montana University System;
- (3) expand distance-learning opportunities for persons not located near a training program;
- (4) expand the number of primary care residency program training positions in Montana, in recognition of the fact that nearly 70% of medical residents practice near the location of their residency program;
- (5) increase participation in multistate medical education programs, including methods to encourage Montana medical students who take part in those programs to return to Montana to practice medicine;
- (6) create a loan repayment program for allied health care professionals similar to the Montana Rural Physician Incentive Program;

(7) expand training and recruitment programs for oral health professionals; and

(8) further the recommendations of the Initiative on the Future of Nursing, undertaken jointly by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and Institute of Medicine, to address nursing workforce issues of supply, recruitment, and retention.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the study involve or gather input from representatives of health care provider and consumer organizations, the Montana University System, the Montana Office of Rural Health, the Montana Area Health Education Centers, the Office of Public Instruction, the Department of Labor and Industry's health care licensure boards, and other interested parties.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2012.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions, comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 63rd Legislature.

- END -

I hereby certify that the within joint resolution,  
SJ 0018, originated in the Senate.

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Secretary of the Senate

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President of the Senate

Signed this \_\_\_\_\_ day  
of \_\_\_\_\_, 2011.

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Speaker of the House

Signed this \_\_\_\_\_ day  
of \_\_\_\_\_, 2011.

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 18

INTRODUCED BY K. GILLAN

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