

SENATE BILL 459

J2, J1

8lr2664

By: **Senators Middleton, Colburn, Dyson, Edwards, Glassman, and Munson**

Introduced and read first time: January 31, 2008

Assigned to: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Task Force to Review Physician Shortages in Rural Areas**

3 FOR the purpose of creating a Task Force to Review Physician Shortages in Rural
4 Areas; providing for the composition, cochairs, and staffing of the Task Force;
5 prohibiting a member of the Task Force from receiving compensation but
6 authorizing members to be reimbursed for certain expenses; requiring the Task
7 Force to study the recruitment and retention of certain physicians in certain
8 rural areas, the funding of certain programs, certain academic recruitment
9 programs, certain federal and State programs relating to physician distribution,
10 and certain financial and tax incentives for physicians who practice in certain
11 rural areas; requiring the Task Force to make certain recommendations;
12 requiring the Task Force to report to the Governor and to certain committees of
13 the General Assembly regarding certain findings and recommendations;
14 providing for the termination of this Act; and generally relating to the Task
15 Force to Review Physician Shortages in Rural Areas.

16 Preamble

17 WHEREAS, Rural health care delivery is an important component of developing
18 statewide health care delivery; and

19 WHEREAS, Based on a recent report by the Maryland Hospital Association
20 there exists an extreme lack of coverage in rural areas of the State; and

21 WHEREAS, Although residents in rural areas comprise one-quarter of the
22 United States population, they do not have the same level of access to basic primary
23 health care services that is available to other Americans; and

24 WHEREAS, Health care delivery in rural communities is further complicated by
25 poverty, inadequate transportation, large geographical distances, an aging population
26 base, and economic decline; now, therefore,

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
2 MARYLAND, That:

3 (a) There is a Task Force to Review Physician Shortages in Rural Areas of
4 the State.

5 (b) The Task Force consists of the following members:

6 (1) one member of the Senate of Maryland, appointed by the President
7 of the Senate;

8 (2) one member of the House of Delegates, appointed by the Speaker of
9 the House;

10 (3) the Secretary of Health and Mental Hygiene, or the Secretary's
11 designee;

12 (4) the Chair of the State Board of Physicians, or the Chair's designee;

13 (5) the Secretary of Higher Education, or the Secretary's designee;

14 (6) the Chancellor of the University System of Maryland, or the
15 Chancellor's designee;

16 (7) the Dean of the University of Maryland School of Medicine, or the
17 Dean's designee;

18 (8) the President of Johns Hopkins University, or the President's
19 designee;

20 (9) one representative from a community college, selected and
21 appointed by the Maryland Association of Community Colleges;

22 (10) one representative from MedChi, selected and appointed by
23 MedChi;

24 (11) one representative of the Maryland Hospital Association, selected
25 and appointed by the Maryland Hospital Association;

26 (12) three representatives of rural hospitals that serve southern
27 Maryland, western Maryland, or the Eastern Shore of Maryland, selected and
28 appointed by the Maryland Hospital Association; and

29 (13) one representative from the Maryland Rural Health Association,
30 selected and appointed by the Maryland Rural Health Association.

1 (c) The member appointed by the President of the Senate and the member
2 appointed by the Speaker of the House shall serve as cochairs of the Task Force.

3 (d) The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene shall provide staff for the
4 Task Force.

5 (e) A member of the Task Force:

6 (1) may not receive compensation as a member of the Task Force; but

7 (2) is entitled to reimbursement for expenses under the Standard
8 State Travel Regulations, as provided in the State budget.

9 (f) The Task Force shall:

10 (1) study the recruitment and retention of primary care physicians in
11 rural areas of the State;

12 (2) study the funding of programs to encourage physician practice in
13 rural areas;

14 (3) study new academic physician recruitment programs to enroll and
15 encourage students interested in rural life and practice;

16 (4) study federal and State programs to equalize physician
17 distribution across geographic areas;

18 (5) study financial and tax incentives for physicians who practice in
19 rural underserved areas; and

20 (6) make recommendations regarding what should be done to
21 encourage more primary care physicians to practice in rural areas of the State.

22 (g) On or before December 1, 2008, the Task Force shall report to the
23 Governor and, in accordance with § 2-1246 of the State Government Article, the
24 House Health and Government Operations Committee, the Senate Education, Health,
25 and Environmental Affairs Committee, and the Senate Finance Committee regarding
26 its findings and recommendations.

27 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
28 June 1, 2008. It shall remain effective for a period of 1 year and 1 month and, at the
29 end of June 30, 2009, with no further action required by the General Assembly, this
30 Act shall be abrogated and of no further force and effect.