Resolve, to Establish the Rural Health Services Task Force

Reference to the Committee on Health and Human Services suggested and ordered printed.

Presented by President JACKSON of Aroostook.
Cosponsored by Representative ALBERT of Madawaska and
Senators: BALDACCI of Penobscot, STEWART of Aroostook, Representatives: BABIN of
Fort Fairfield, DILL of Old Town, GUERRETTE of Caribou, MEYER of Eliot, THERIAULT
of Fort Kent.
Sec. 1. Task force established. Resolved: That the Rural Health Services Task Force, referred to in this resolve as "the task force," is established.

Sec. 2. Task force membership. Resolved: That, notwithstanding Joint Rule 353, the task force consists of 10 members as follows:

1. The Executive Director of the Office of Affordable Health Care or the executive director's designee;

2. The director of the office of rural health and primary care within the Department of Health and Human Services;

3. The following members appointed by the President of the Senate:
   A. Two members from a statewide organization representing hospitals located in different regions of the State and that face different levels of financial stability;
   B. One member from a statewide organization representing primary care providers working in federally qualified health centers; and
   C. One member from a statewide organization representing physicians; and

4. The following members appointed by the Speaker of the House:
   A. One member from an organization that advocates for consumers of health care that use free clinic programs and other safety net programs in the State;
   B. One member who is a provider of behavioral health services in a rural part of the State;
   C. One member from a statewide organization that represents providers of home health services; and
   D. One member from a statewide organization that represents long-term care providers.

Sec. 3. Meetings; chair; quorum. Resolved: That the Executive Director of the Office of Affordable Health Care or the executive director's designee shall call the first meeting of the task force. Notwithstanding Joint Rule 353, the task force shall select a chair from among its members at the first meeting. A majority of the membership of the task force constitutes a quorum.

Sec. 4. Duties. Resolved: That the task force shall consider rural health care delivery in the State, including:

1. Evaluating the current system of rural health care delivery in the State, including the role of rural hospitals in the health care continuum;

2. Identifying how to ensure the sustainability of the rural health care system, including identifying the major financial, administrative and workforce barriers and providing technical assistance to support sustainability;

3. Proposing ways to overcome existing barriers to the sustainability of the rural health care system, including ideas to preserve access to health care services in rural parts of the State across the health care continuum;

4. Proposing ways to encourage and improve care coordination among institutional and community service providers;
5. Determining if alternative payment models would improve access to and quality of rural health care delivery; and
6. Assessing the potential consequences of one or more rural hospitals in the State closing.

Sec. 5. **Staff assistance.** Resolved: That the Department of Health and Human Services and the Office of Affordable Health Care shall provide staff assistance to the task force.

Sec. 6. **Report.** Resolved: That the task force shall prepare and submit a written report to the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services on its recommendations, including suggested legislation, no later than December 6, 2023.

**SUMMARY**

This resolve establishes the Rural Health Services Task Force to study rural health care delivery in the State.