

HOUSE BILL 979

Introduced by Barnhart, et al.

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| 3/06 | Introduced |
| 3/06 | Referred to Human Services & Aging |
| 3/07 | First Reading |
| 3/16 | Hearing |
| 3/21 | Tabled in Committee |

1 *House* BILL NO. *979*
 2 INTRODUCED BY *B. Bamhart Eck* *Becker*
 3 *Conrad*

4 A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT REQUIRING THE
 5 DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES TO CONDUCT A
 6 STUDY OF THE AVAILABILITY OF HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS AND
 7 THE ADEQUATE STAFFING OF ESSENTIAL HEALTH CARE FACILITIES IN
 8 MONTANA; REQUIRING THE DEPARTMENT TO REPORT ITS FINDINGS AND
 9 RECOMMENDATIONS; APPROPRIATING MONEY FROM THE GENERAL FUND
 10 FOR THE STUDY; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE."

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 12 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

13 NEW SECTION. **Section 1.** Short title. [Sections 1
 14 through 4] may be cited as the "Essential Health Care
 15 Assessment Act".

16 NEW SECTION. **Section 2.** Definition. For the purposes
 17 of [sections 3 and 4], the term "department" means the
 18 department of health and environmental sciences.

19 NEW SECTION. **Section 3.** Findings. (1) The legislature
 20 finds that rural areas of the state are underserved with
 21 respect to essential health care providers. Several counties
 22 in Montana have no physicians and a large number of counties
 23 do not have local access to obstetrical services, the number
 24 of registered nurses available to serve in rural clinics and
 25 rural hospitals is decreasing, many residents of rural

1 communities do not have access to basic or emergency dental
 2 services, and rural and urban hospitals expend large sums of
 3 money on recruitment programs to locate health care
 4 providers.

5 (2) The legislature further finds that Montana does not
 6 have an overall health care assessment plan that addresses
 7 the current number, distribution, and long-term needs of
 8 health care providers in Montana or the educational
 9 preparation of health care professionals, nor has the state
 10 developed strategies to meet the state's need for the
 11 availability and adequate staffing of health care
 12 facilities.

13 NEW SECTION. **Section 4.** Study to assess health care
 14 staffing in Montana. (1) The department shall conduct an
 15 in-depth assessment of the availability of health care
 16 professionals and the staffing of essential health care
 17 facilities in Montana. The department may work or contract
 18 with universities, health care associations, private
 19 foundations, or other organizations to fulfill the intent of
 20 [sections 1 through 4] and the study requirements described
 21 in subsection (2).

22 (2) The department's study and recommendations must
 23 include:

24 (a) a plan to obtain the data required to conduct a
 25 study on the availability of health care professionals and



1 the adequate staffing of health care facilities;

2 (b) an analysis of current staffing levels in health
3 care facilities and the current availability of health care
4 professionals in the state and in each county and community
5 in the state;

6 (c) a projection of the future and long-term
7 requirements for health care professionals in the state and
8 in each county and community in the state;

9 (d) a review of educational programs in Montana that
10 prepare students for careers as health care professionals;

11 (e) a review and analysis of continuing education for
12 health care providers in Montana;

13 (f) an analysis of federal programs that provide access
14 to professional health care education;

15 (g) a study of the impact of federal programs on the
16 availability of health care in Montana; and

17 (h) a plan to address identified concerns regarding the
18 availability and adequate staffing of health care facilities
19 in Montana.

20 (3) The department's study and recommendations must be
21 submitted to the governor and the 53rd legislature.

22 NEW SECTION. Section 5. Appropriation. There is
23 appropriated from the general fund \$20,000 to the department
24 of health and environmental sciences in the first year of
25 the biennium ending June 30, 1993, for personal services,

1 operating expenses, and contract services required to
2 conduct the study described in [section 4].

3 NEW SECTION. Section 6. Effective date. [This act] is
4 effective July 1, 1991.

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