

Legislation Text

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A resolution calling for the Committee on Public Health and Human Services to hold hearings to help the city adequately prepare for, avoid, and, if needed, mitigate the effect of emergency room and hospital closures as research has shown disparate impacts on patients that are low income and/or from communities of color in addition to the loss of jobs.

WHEREAS, Healthcare institutions continue to merge, acquire and realign service and delivery networks across the Greater Philadelphia region and nationally it is imperative that the City investigate how these changes to the healthcare landscape affect City residents as employees and patients. There are few moments of greater vulnerability than the moment when a trip to ER is order; and

WHEREAS, Over the past several decades emergency rooms have been closing and curtailing hours and services particularly at smaller hospitals and “safety net hospitals”; and

WHEREAS, A recent study in the journal Health Affairs, has found that hospital emergency room closures can adversely affect health outcomes for heart attack patients at neighboring hospitals that are near or at full capacity; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia recently saw the closure of Hahnemann University Hospital and, while a health crisis was avoided, local emergency rooms had to absorb additional patients; and

WHEREAS, Mercy Hospital in West Philadelphia faces a potential closure, placing yet more potential strain and loss of jobs; and

WHEREAS, As the poorest big city in America Philadelphia’s residents have healthcare access problems and higher health risks; and

WHEREAS, A research paper published by the National Bureau of Economic Research found that increased distance to the nearest hospital shifts regular care away from emergency rooms and outpatient clinics to doctor's offices. Lower-income residents report more difficulty accessing care, working age residents are less likely to receive HIV tests, and seniors less likely to receive flu shots. Additionally, there was evidence that increased distance raises infant mortality rates and stronger evidence that it increases deaths from unintentional injuries and heart attacks; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia is a hub of healthcare and the repercussions of hospital and emergency room closures ripple through jobs, families and communities, in dangerous and unequal ways. Philadelphia thus must learn to pay more attention or risk too much to bear; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Committee on Public Health and Human Services hold hearings to help the City adequately prepare for, avoid, and, if needed, mitigate the effect of emergency room and hospital closures as research has shown disparate impacts on patients that are low income and/or from communities of color in

addition to the loss of jobs.