Legislation Details (With Text)

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Title: Calling for joint hearings by the Committee on Public Safety and the Committee on Public Health and Human Services to explore alternative health care methods, such as, telemedicine, mobile health care clinics, online therapy, and non-traditional nursing homes for low-income families, disabled, and elderly Philadelphia residents.

Sponsors: Councilmember Jones, Councilmember Tasco

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Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result	Tally
1/16/2014	0	Joint Committees on Public Safety and Public Health and Human Services	HEARING NOTICES SENT		
1/16/2014	0	Joint Committees on Public Safety and Public Health and Human Services	HEARING HELD		
1/16/2014	0	Joint Committees on Public Safety and Public Health and Human Services	RECESSED		
11/21/2013	0	CITY COUNCIL	Introduced and Ordered Placed on This Week's Final Passage Calendar	Pass	
11/21/2013	0	CITY COUNCIL	ADOPTED & REFERRED		

Calling for joint hearings by the Committee on Public Safety and the Committee on Public Health and Human Services to explore alternative health care methods, such as, telemedicine, mobile health care clinics, online therapy, and non-traditional nursing homes for low-income families, disabled, and elderly Philadelphia residents.

WHEREAS, According to a 2012 Pew Charitable Trust report, 72.8% of all hospital visits of Philadelphia residents were paid for by Medicare and Medicaid, while, 15% of the Philadelphia's adults remain uninsured; and

WHEREAS, Residents who are 55 and older represent 23% of the City of Philadelphia's population, while residents between the ages of 21 to 64 in Pennsylvania who are living with a disability represent 11.4% of the population; and

WHEREAS, Since the passing of the Affordable Care Act employers have already seen this reform law increase their costs of health care by two percentage points and a 2013 health care study released by Aon Hewitt reported that health care costs are expected to rise even further in 2014 as average employee out-of-pocket costs will rise to $2,470; and

WHEREAS, Affordable and convenient health care options such as telemedicine, mobile dental clinics, and online therapy are alternatives that should be available to citizens who cannot afford or obtain traditional health care in the City of Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, Telemedicine and telehealth services such as "Teladoc" are providing a health care solution that allows patients to cut down both costs of health care and use of time by contacting doctors via the telephone for non-emergency cases such as poison ivy, bronchitis, pink eye, and respiratory infections; and

WHEREAS, Telemedicine allows patients to receive general consultations, guidance regarding chronic conditions, interpretation of lab results, as well as, referrals to specialists and hospitals when necessary, all from the comfort of their own homes; and

WHEREAS, Mobile dental clinics provide patients, especially children from low income families and the elderly, with convenient dental work for low and affordable costs; and

WHEREAS, Various mobile dental clinics such as Miles of Smiles and Tooth Mobile, based in the Southern and Western parts of the country respectively, are dental programs that visit schools and senior care facilities. These clinics provide convenience for students in need of dental care whose parents cannot afford to take time out of their work day to accompany them to the dentist, as well as, elderly senior citizens or those living with disabilities who have difficulty making visits to the dentists' or doctors' office on their own; and

WHEREAS, The University of Pennsylvania launched a PENN Smiles Dental Clinic Program that extends the classroom into the community by serving students living in the West Philadelphia area, while at the same time, providing hands-on learning opportunities to dentistry students, serving as an example for other universities to follow in meeting an important need in the community, while serving their students simultaneously; and

WHEREAS, Psychotherapy and counseling via Skype or other video-conferencing sites provide statistically high patient satisfaction due to the relaxed atmosphere created by the video-conferencing environment, as well as, the allowance for the patients to contact therapists from the convenience of their home; and

WHEREAS, Low-cost alternatives to nursing homes, examples including the Green House project, provide senior citizens, who wish to maintain a sense of independence and mobility, by embedding these individuals in independent community-based houses that are under the care of specialized nursing assistants. The appropriate level of independent living allows low-income senior citizens to gain access to affordable health care, while maintaining their flexibility; and

WHEREAS, All of these programs, originally created for convenience of patients in rural areas, should be taken into consideration of senior citizens, residents living with a disability, as well as, low-income families who either cannot afford or do not have access to traditional health care; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That Council hereby authorizes joint hearings by the Committee on Public Safety and the Committee on Public Health and Human Services to explore various alternative health care methods such as telemedicine, mobile health care clinics, online therapy, and non-traditional nursing homes for residents of the City of Philadelphia who are unable to safely and freely travel to doctors' offices, as well as, low-income residents who are in need of additional affordable health care options.

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