

Legislation Text

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Urging the Pennsylvania General Assembly to pass Senate Bill 1137, which extends the Medical Care Availability and Reduction of Error Program and establishes the Pennsylvania Access to Basic Care Program Fund and the Continuing Access with Relief for Employers Fund to assist physicians and provide health care coverage for employees and employers.

WHEREAS, In 2002, Governor Rendell and the General Assembly created the Medical Care Availability and Reduction of Error ("MCARE") Program to assist physicians with malpractice insurance through the use of an abatement and since 2003, the General Assembly has annually approved one-year extensions to the Program with the last extension ending December 31, 2007; and

WHEREAS, The adultBasic Program, established by the Tobacco Settlement in 2001, provides insurance benefits to an estimated 53,000 previously uninsured Pennsylvanians and has a waiting list of approximately 80,000 individuals; and

WHEREAS, Access to quality and affordable health care is a major crisis for many Pennsylvanians and the Governor and the General Assembly must take executive and legislative action to address this issue; and

WHEREAS, To address this issue, Senate Bill 1137 extends the MCARE Program for the next ten years and, during this same time, coverage limits will increase and, additionally, this bill proposes taking \$258 million dollars from the Health Care Providers Retention Fund and setting it aside immediately for the exclusive use of paying off the unfunded liability of the MCARE Program Fund when it ends in 2018; and

WHEREAS, Senate Bill 1137 also establishes, through \$246 million in funding from the Health Care Providers Retention Fund, the Pennsylvania Access to Basic Care ("PA ABC") Program and Continuing Access with Relief for Employers ("CARE") Funds; and

WHEREAS, For eligible employees and employers, the PA ABC Program assists employers that do not provide health care insurance for their employees to do so for their employees at 50% of the full insurance premium cost (not less than \$150 per month per employee) and the CARE Program provides grants to small employers that already provide health care insurance for their employees; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That we hereby urge the Pennsylvania General Assembly to pass Senate Bill 1137, which extends the Medical Care Availability and Reduction of Error Program and establishes the Pennsylvania Access to Basic Care Program Fund and the Continuing Access with Relief for Employers Fund to assist physicians and provide health care coverage for employees and employers.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution be transmitted to the Governor and the House and Senate leadership of the Pennsylvania General Assembly.