

108TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 3668

To amend the Public Health Service Act to provide greater access for residents of frontier areas to health care services provided by community health centers.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

DECEMBER 8, 2003

Mr. CARSON of Oklahoma introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce

A BILL

To amend the Public Health Service Act to provide greater access for residents of frontier areas to health care services provided by community health centers.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Frontier Health Care
5 Access Act of 2003”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE.**

7 (a) FINDINGS.—The Congress finds as follows:

1 (1) People who live in frontier areas are medi-
2 cally underserved and face unique challenges in ac-
3 cessing affordable health care.

4 (2) People who live in frontier areas are more
5 likely to lack health insurance than other rural and
6 urban citizens.

7 (3) Frontier areas generally do not have popu-
8 lation centers that can support the full range of
9 health care services available in most urban and
10 some rural areas.

11 (4) Community health centers play an impor-
12 tant role in providing health services to many medi-
13 cally underserved areas and populations.

14 (5) Many frontier areas do not have community
15 health centers.

16 (6) Many frontier areas cannot currently qual-
17 ify for community health centers because the Fed-
18 eral definition of medically underserved areas or
19 populations does not appropriately or effectively rec-
20 ognize the unique nature and needs of frontier areas
21 and those who live in them.

22 (7) Any definition of frontier areas for purposes
23 of eligibility for Federal or State health care pro-
24 grams should look beyond simple measures of popu-
25 lation density to consider such factors as the dis-

1 tance from and travel time to the nearest significant
2 health care service center or market.

3 (8) People who live in frontier areas should be
4 included explicitly in this expansion of the commu-
5 nity health center program.

6 (b) PURPOSE.—It is the purpose of this Act to pro-
7 vide greater access for residents of frontier areas to the
8 health care services provided by community health centers.

9 **SEC. 3. FRONTIER COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS.**

10 Section 330 of the Public Health Service Act (42
11 U.S.C. 254b) is amended—

12 (1) in subsection (a)(1), by striking “and resi-
13 dents of public housing” and inserting “residents of
14 public housing, or residents of frontier areas”; and

15 (2) by inserting after subsection (r) the fol-
16 lowing:

17 “(s) RESIDENTS OF FRONTIER AREAS.—

18 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may award
19 grants for the purposes described in subsections (c),
20 (e), and (f) for the planning and delivery of services
21 to a special medically underserved population com-
22 prised of residents of a frontier area.

23 “(2) SUPPLEMENT NOT SUPPLANT.—A grant
24 awarded under this subsection shall be expended to
25 supplement, and not supplant, the expenditures of

1 the health center involved and the value of in-kind
2 contributions for the delivery of services to the popu-
3 lation described in paragraph (1).

4 “(3) DEFINITION.—

5 “(A) IN GENERAL.—In this subsection, the
6 term ‘frontier area’ means a county or a ration-
7 al area identified by the Secretary, in consulta-
8 tion with appropriate State offices of rural
9 health, as meeting the definition developed by
10 the Secretary under subparagraph (B).

11 “(B) REGULATIONS.—The Secretary shall
12 through regulations develop a definition of a
13 frontier area for purposes of this subsection. In
14 developing such definition, the Secretary shall
15 consider factors such as population density, dis-
16 tance in miles from the nearest significant
17 health care service center or market, and travel
18 time in minutes from the nearest significant
19 health care service center or market.”.

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