

1 A JOINT RESOLUTION directing the University of Kentucky, the University of  
2 Louisville, and Eastern Kentucky University to coordinate a search for actionable  
3 solutions to physician shortages and to explore and expand health care opportunities in  
4 medically underserved areas in collaboration with community, state agency, professional  
5 associations, and other stakeholders, making an appropriation therefor, and declaring an  
6 emergency.

7 WHEREAS, over 75 percent of physicians practice in urban areas in Kentucky,  
8 leaving many counties with a shortage of physicians; and

9 WHEREAS, the United States Department of Health and Human Services has  
10 designated 40 counties as health professional shortage areas for primary care providers;  
11 and

12 WHEREAS, without local access to physicians, individuals in medically  
13 underserved areas are often compelled to travel long distances to other counties for health  
14 care, which may involve transportation and financial barriers and result in individuals  
15 going without care; and

16 WHEREAS, regular primary care physician visits serve as the first line in  
17 diagnosing illness and have been associated with a reduced number of hospitalizations  
18 and emergency room department visits; and

19 WHEREAS, the Association of American Medical Colleges reports that 57 percent  
20 of medical residents continued practicing medicine in their training state; and

21 WHEREAS, 38 percent of physicians practice medicine in the same state where  
22 they completed undergraduate medical education, and the rate is higher for public  
23 undergraduate medical school graduates, 46 percent; and

24 WHEREAS, according to the American Medical Association, the highest state  
25 retention rates are for family medicine, 64.6 percent, psychiatry, 64.5 percent, and  
26 pediatrics, 60 percent; and

27 WHEREAS, while some efforts have been made to increase medical residency

1 placements and admissions into medical school in Kentucky, these efforts have not been  
2 nearly enough to meet the need; and

3 WHEREAS, greater efforts could be taken to encourage medical school graduates  
4 to complete their residencies in medically underserved areas so they might be compelled  
5 to continue practicing medicine and living there; and

6 WHEREAS, opportunities to expand health care access in medically underserved  
7 areas may include health care workforce diversification, innovative technology-enabled  
8 solutions and support, and attention to non-clinical health care needs and community-  
9 based care;

10 NOW, THEREFORE,

11 ***Be it resolved by the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky:***

12 ➔Section 1. (1) The General Assembly directs the University of Kentucky,  
13 the University of Louisville, and Eastern Kentucky University to coordinate a search for  
14 actionable solutions to the physician shortages and to explore and expand health care  
15 opportunities in collaboration with community, state agency, professional associations,  
16 and other stakeholders. The search to find actionable solutions and explore opportunities  
17 to expand health care access shall focus on the:

18 (a) Shortage of primary and specialty care physicians in medically underserved  
19 areas;

20 (b) Chronic lack of access to physician care by medically underserved  
21 populations;

22 (c) Retaining of physicians in medically underserved areas; and

23 (d) Workforce, technological, and community-based opportunities to increase  
24 access to care.

25 (2) The search and exploration shall include an examination of:

26 (a) Current actions being taken;

27 (b) Possibilities for building on current actions; and

- 1 (c) Innovative actions that may be taken, including but not limited to:
- 2 1. Sponsorship of community graduate medical education programs;
- 3 2. Growing graduate medical education sites in medically underserved areas;
- 4 3. Encouraging safe international physician recruitment;
- 5 4. Increasing basic administration reimbursement for recruitment and placement
- 6 services of medical students, residents, and physicians;
- 7 5. Integrating workforce diversification in educational programs;
- 8 6. Expanding technological health care delivery options; and
- 9 7. Considering community-based medical models.

10 (2) The search and exploration shall include an analysis of any existing regulatory

11 or statutory barriers to achieving a solution that attracts providers to medically

12 underserved areas and does not limit modifications or expansions to medical education

13 programs.

14 (3) The University of Kentucky, the University of Louisville, and Eastern

15 Kentucky University shall coordinate to develop a report to be submitted to the General

16 Assembly by January 1, 2027. The report shall:

17 (a) Describe and provide data on medically underserved areas and medically

18 underserved populations by county on the:

- 19 1. Shortage of primary and specialty care physicians;
- 20 2. Lack of access to physician care; and
- 21 3. Retention of physicians;

22 (b) Provide an overview of:

- 23 1. Current actions;
- 24 2. Possibilities for building on current actions;
- 25 3. Innovative actions that may be taken; and
- 26 4. Regulatory or statutory barriers; and

27 (c) Provide detailed actional solutions and a discussion of opportunities to expand

1 health care opportunities to address the physician shortages in medically underserved  
2 areas of Kentucky, including:

- 3 1. Agencies that may be responsible for the actions;
- 4 2. Resources needed to achieve the actions; and
- 5 3. A suggested timeframe for achieving the solutions.

6 ➔Section 2. There is hereby appropriated General Fund moneys in the amount of  
7 \$250,000 in fiscal year 2026-2027 for the administration and production of the report  
8 required under Section 1 of this Act.

9 ➔Section 3. Whereas finding solutions to the shortage of physicians and  
10 exploring and expanding health care opportunities in medically underserved areas of the  
11 Commonwealth are critically important for the health and well-being of the citizens of  
12 this state, an emergency is declared to exist, and this Act takes effect July 1, 2026.