

SENATE RESOLUTION No. 1881

A RESOLUTION congratulating and commending Karla Finnell for her years of dedicated service to the people of Kansas as Executive Director of the Kansas Association for the Medically Underserved.

WHEREAS, Karla Finnell, Executive Director of the Kansas Association for the Medically Underserved (KAMU) since 2003, will be leaving her post this summer; and

WHEREAS, KAMU represents more than 30 Kansas primary care safety net clinics, which serve the uninsured and underinsured regardless of their ability to pay. The clinics provided care to more than 127,000 people last year; and

WHEREAS, In Kansas, an estimated 300,000 people are uninsured. Primary care safety net clinics serve more than 127,000 Kansans of which approximately 63% of the people served by KAMU's member clinics are uninsured, while 93% of them live at or near the poverty level (with an income at 200% of the federal poverty level or below); and

WHEREAS, Under Karla Finnell's leadership, KAMU has expanded access to high quality, comprehensive care for underserved people across the state. Karla increased the association's focus on advocacy, clinical quality and community development to impact the lives of more than 127,000 Kansans last year. Perhaps the most visible outcome of her tenure is the increase of state funding and private support for the primary care safety net clinics, which has enabled the clinics to make major expansions in their programs and services; and

WHEREAS, During Karla's tenure, KAMU offered increased training and technical assistance to the clinics as they grew their services. This resulted not only in an increase in the number of patients seen every year, but in the comprehensiveness of the care they received. This growth and capacity building have also focused on performance-based delivery, promoting accountability. The most dramatic growth has come in an area that is often overlooked for the underserved: Oral health services. Dental services at the Kansas clinics have quadrupled since 2003 and the clinics are now pursuing a strategic plan for dental hubs to make oral health care available to even more Kansans who lack access. Medication assistance programs have also grown rapidly. One-hundred percent of the state's eligible health centers and FQHC Look-Alikes now provide access to 340 prescriptions and all KAMU members have expanded their use of manufacturers' access to prescription drugs; and

WHEREAS, With Karla's leadership, KAMU spearheaded regulator and policy changes on issues that affect safety net clinics, such as Medicaid reimbursement and scope of practice. These changes will allow clinics to provide more than one type of visit per day, such as oral health and medical services, and recover more of the cost for serving Medicaid patients. Access to comprehensive preventive services and preservation of grant dollars for vulnerable Kansans without insurance coverage will also be greatly improved. This year, KAMU also proposed a capital loan guarantee to help clinics expand and remodel. This bill passed as part of Senate Bill No. 11; and

WHEREAS, Karla also guided KAMU's role in workforce development. Though caring for the underserved is tremendously rewarding work, clinics often find it difficult to recruit professional staff. KAMU has forged partnerships with universities, dental schools and other organizations to build the workforce for safety net clinics. In collaboration with the University of Kansas, KAMU developed a web-based certificate program in health center management to develop leadership and management skills for primary care safety net clinics, recognizing that strong leaders are key to ensuring that clinics are good stewards of public resources. KAMU also hosts a program for volunteers through a state AmeriCorps program. Under Karla's leadership, the program has developed clear goals and a number of volunteers have now committed to careers in primary health care for underserved populations. In addition, the dental school at the University of Missouri Kansas City will soon be placing dental students in safety net clinics to promote the pursuit of careers in underserved areas: Now, therefore,

*Be it resolved by the Senate of the State of Kansas:* That we congratulate and commend Karla Finnell for her years of service as Executive Director of the Kansas Association for the Medically Underserved and for her dedication to the people of Kansas; and

*Be it further resolved:* That the Secretary of the Senate provide enrolled copies of this resolution to Karla Finnell and Senator Barnett.

Senate Resolution No. 1881 was sponsored by Senators Barnett, Allen, Apple, Barone, Betts, Brownlee, Bruce, Brungardt, Donovan, Emler, Francisco, Gilstrap, Goodwin, Haley, Hensley, Huelskamp, Jordan, Journey, Kelly, Lee, Lynn, McGinn, Morris, Ostmeyer, Palmer, Petersen, Pine, Pyle, Reitz, D. Schmidt, V. Schmidt, Schodorf, Steineger, Taddiken, Teichman, Umbarger, Vratil, Wagle, Wilson and Wysong.

I hereby certify that the above RESOLUTION originated in the SENATE, and was adopted by that body

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*President of the Senate.*

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*Secretary of the Senate.*