

1 State of Arkansas  
2 81st General Assembly  
3 Regular Session, 1997

H.C.R. 1016

4 By: Representatives Roberts, Northcutt, Bennett, Brown, Schexnayder, Wilson, Harris and Judy Smith

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## 7 **HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION**

8 URGING ADEQUATE PUBLIC FUNDING OF HEALTH CARE PROGRAMS FOR  
9 LOW-INCOME CITIZENS, INCLUDING MEDICAID, PROGRAMS OF  
10 ASSISTANCE TO AIDS PATIENTS, AND PHARMACEUTICAL ASSISTANCE  
11 PROGRAMS FOR THE LOW-INCOME ELDERLY AND THAT PATIENTS HAVE  
12 ACCESS TO MEDICALLY NECESSARY TREATMENTS, INCLUDING  
13 PRESCRIPTION MEDICINES AND THAT THE PHYSICIAN'S JUDGMENT  
14 REGARDING THE APPROPRIATE MEDICATION, TREATMENTS, AND  
15 PATIENT CARE FOR HIS OR HER PATIENT BE RESPECTED.

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### 17 **Subtitle**

18 URGES ADEQUATE HEALTH CARE FUNDING FOR  
19 LOW-INCOME CITIZENS AND PHARMACEUTICAL  
20 ASSISTANCE AND THAT PATIENTS HAVE ACCESS  
21 TO MEDICAL CARE AND A PHYSICIAN'S  
22 JUDGMENT ABOUT PATIENT CARE BE  
23 RESPECTED.

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25 WHEREAS, prescription medicines are a particularly cost-effective  
26 component of health care, at only five cents (\$.05) of every health care  
27 dollar, and pharmaceuticals offer potential savings of many millions of  
28 dollars in cures of disease and in relief of pain; and

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30 WHEREAS, as these new remedies become available, many of our poorest  
31 citizens cannot afford basic health care services and some forty-nine million  
32 (49,000,000) U.S. citizens still lack basic health insurance coverage, and  
33 even still, those who are insured often lack coverage for prescription drugs;  
34 and

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36 WHEREAS, in the face of increasing public demand for access to health

1 care, public programs face ever-tightening budgets, and are reacting to these  
2 dual pressures by restricting beneficiaries' access to services, including  
3 access to prescription drugs, in a short-sighted effort to control costs; and  
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5 WHEREAS, Medicaid, the nation's largest health program, has undergone  
6 fundamental change in recent years, as states have contracted out the  
7 management of their programs to private-sector managed care organizations, who  
8 agree to deliver comprehensive services for a fixed price for each enrollee,  
9 regardless of the services actually provided or the specific procedures  
10 performed and those state Medicaid programs are now expanding to include not  
11 only mothers and children, but the disabled, AIDS victims, the elderly, and  
12 the mentally ill with greater need for services, and an ongoing need for  
13 prescription drugs; and  
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15 WHEREAS, African-Americans are disproportionately represented among both  
16 Medicaid populations and the uninsured; and are disproportionately affected by  
17 diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, strokes, and tuberculosis, that can  
18 be successfully treated with appropriate pharmaceutical care and  
19 the AIDS epidemic is having a devastating effect on the African-American  
20 community, and is now the leading cause of death of young adult African-  
21 Americans, just as new drug remedies are becoming available that could extend  
22 and benefit their lives; and  
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24 WHEREAS, all public programs will save money in the long run by seeing  
25 that low-income patients receive care in appropriate settings, as part of an  
26 integrated system, with prescription drugs provided as each physician judges  
27 necessary and access to prescription medicines should be unrestricted and  
28 respect for the physician's judgment in choosing the appropriate medicine for  
29 each patient is a crucial element of high quality health care for African-  
30 Americans and for all citizens; and  
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32 WHEREAS, the membership of the Black Caucus may differ on the specifics  
33 of effective health care programs but are united in their commitment to first  
34 and foremost protect the rights of all patients, and particularly African-  
35 American patients,

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2 NOW THEREFORE,

3 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE EIGHTY-FIRST GENERAL

4 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS, THE SENATE CONCURRING THEREIN:

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6 THAT the General Assembly of the State of Arkansas advocates adequate  
7 public funding of health care programs for low-income citizens, and high  
8 standards of quality in all public programs, including Medicaid, federal-state  
9 programs of assistance to AIDS patients, and pharmaceutical assistance  
10 programs for the low-income elderly and that these programs include  
11 requirements that patients have access to medically necessary treatments,  
12 including prescription medicines; that the physician's judgment regarding the  
13 appropriate medication for his or her patient is respected; that patients are  
14 fully informed about the scope of their pharmaceutical benefit; that patients  
15 have an opportunity to voice their grievances and to appeal denials of care,  
16 including denials of brand-name prescription drugs; and that health plans make  
17 their decisions about patient care, and about pharmaceutical therapy, by a  
18 process that ensures the scientific and clinical integrity of those decisions.

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