

EXECUTIVE ORDER NUMBER 35

WHEREAS, a crisis exists in the State of Alabama with regard to the availability of health care services to rural Alabamians, said crisis including the closing of many rural hospitals; and

WHEREAS, many and varied efforts have been made by both public and private interests to alleviate the problem of diminishing access to health care and to prevent the closure of rural hospitals; and

WHEREAS, these commendable efforts have come from many diverse areas but no means of coordination exists among the entities attempting to come to the rescue of Alabama's rural health care delivery system; and

WHEREAS, a coordinated, inter-agency, effort will enable the public and private agencies involved to better address these problems; and

WHEREAS, seven state agencies are currently involved in issues relating to rural health care, namely, the Governor's Rural Development Initiative Office, the State Health Planning and Development Agency, the Alabama Medicaid Agency, the Alabama Department of Economic and

Community Affairs, the Alabama Department of Human Resources, the Alabama Department of Public Health, and the Alabama Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation; and

WHEREAS, there is an urgent need for the coordination of the activities of these various agencies, as well as the activities of other private entities, in order to provide efficient use of available resources that will establish the appropriate level of health care needed in Alabama's rural areas; and

WHEREAS, the Medical Association of The State of Alabama, because of its awareness of this need, has urged the implementation of "a cohesive and unified program which will ensure quality health care to citizens of rural Alabama;"

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Guy Hunt, as Governor of the State of Alabama, under and by virtue of the authority vested in me by law, do hereby establish and create a council, to be known as the Alabama Council on Rural Health Care (hereinafter "Council"). The Council shall consist of seven members: the Governor's Administrative Assistant for Agriculture and Rural Development, or designee; the Director of the State Health Planning and Development Agency, or designee; the Commissioner of the Alabama

Medicaid Agency, or designee; the Director of the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs, or designee; the Commissioner of the Alabama Department of Human Resources, or designee; the State Health Officer, or designee; and the Commissioner of the Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation, or designee.

The primary function of the Council shall be to facilitate the improvement of the rural health care delivery system in Alabama by coordinating inter-agency efforts in the public sector together with the efforts of various entities in the private sector. The Council shall identify the health care needs of each rural community, and formulate recommendations to meet these needs in a cost-effective manner.

The Director of the State Health Planning and Development Agency shall serve as Chairman of the Council. The State Health Officer shall serve as Vice Chairman of the Council. The Council shall report to the Governor the needs that are identified by the Council and the recommendations made to meet those needs. The Council shall meet at the call of the Chairman.

The Chairman shall cause to be established a separate office within the State Health Planning and Development Agency, to be known as the Alabama Office of Rural Health

Care (hereinafter "Office") which shall provide the resources and staff support required to facilitate and coordinate the activities of the Council. The member agencies of the Council shall participate by providing such funding, staff, and other resources to the State Health Planning and Development Agency as may be required to maintain the Office.

In order that timely and complete information may be obtained by the Council, the Chairman of the Council shall appoint a Technical Support Committee which shall include, but need not be limited to, the following members: three representatives from the Board of Censors of the Alabama Medical Association, the Chairman of the Small and Rural Hospital Constituency Group of the Alabama Hospital Association, a representative of the Alabama Primary Health Care Association, and a representative of the Alabama Nursing Home Association.

The Council and the Office are specifically charged with the following activities:

- 1) To coordinate the rural health activities of the various member agencies of the Council in order to promote a centralized effort and to ensure effective utilization of the state's resources.

- 2) To serve as a centralized source of information to the public regarding the rural health activities and resources of the various member agencies of the Council.
- 3) To promote the utilization of the resources that are available in both the public and private sectors for the improvement of Alabama's rural health care delivery system.
- 4) To create a forum to ensure that rural Alabamians have a significant role in addressing rural health issues.
- 5) To work with health care consumers and providers and community and business leaders in individual rural communities in order to assist communities in planning for their individual rural health needs.
- 6) To work with health care consumers and providers and community and business leaders on a statewide basis in order to achieve a comprehensive, integrated statewide system of access to quality rural health care.
- 7) To make known to the public the services available through the Alabama Office of Rural Health Care.
- 8) To perform such other duties and functions as the Council deems necessary to carry out the purposes of this Executive Order.

This Executive Order shall become immediately effective upon the Governor's signature, and shall remain in effect until amended or modified by the Governor.

DONE AND ORDERED this 10th day of July, 1990.



Guy Hunt
Governor

ATTEST:



Perry A. Hand
Secretary of State

