

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2003**

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HOUSE BILL 1084

Short Title: Funds for Uncompensated Prenatal Care. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Insko; Luebke and Hackney.

Referred to: Appropriations.

April 10, 2003

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS FOR UNCOMPENSATED PRENATAL
2 CARE FOR NON-MEDICAID, LOW-INCOME PATIENTS SERVED BY LOCAL
3 HEALTH DEPARTMENTS.
4

5 Whereas, women that receive no prenatal care are three times more likely to
6 deliver a low birth weight baby; and

7 Whereas, eighty percent (80%) of women at risk for having a low birth
8 weight baby can be identified through their first prenatal visit; and

9 Whereas, a shift of only half a pound (250 grams) in a baby's birth weight
10 saves an average of \$14,000 in first year medical costs alone, and a shift of just over one
11 pound (500 grams) saves about \$28,000; and

12 Whereas, the cost of caring for five low birth weight babies will pay for the
13 prenatal care of 149 women; and

14 Whereas, hospitals and physicians receive payment for delivery in hospitals
15 through Emergency Medicaid, but prenatal care is not covered; and

16 Whereas, the demand for prenatal services offered to non-Medicaid,
17 low-income patients served in local public health departments has increased
18 significantly due to the surge of the uninsured population; and

19 Whereas, block grant funds, which are a combination of State and federal
20 funding, have decreased since the mid 1990's and are projected to continue to decrease;
21 and

22 Whereas, appropriations from local governments, which have made up the
23 additional revenue needed to keep the local health department maternity program viable,
24 have decreased due to the rising costs of the county share of Medicaid and the
25 withholding of tax revenue from the State; and

26 Whereas, many counties have serious concern for the future viability of their
27 maternity programs, which will limit the access of care for uninsured maternity patients;

28 Now, therefore,

29 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

1 **SECTION 1.** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the
2 Department of Health and Human Services the sum of seven million dollars
3 (\$7,000,000) for the 2003-2004 fiscal year and the sum of seven million dollars
4 (\$7,000,000) for the 2004-2005 fiscal year. These funds shall be allocated to local
5 public health departments for service delivery to non-Medicaid, low-income prenatal
6 patients.

7 **SECTION 2.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2003.