

## North Carolina Volunteer Health Care Services Act

Physician-volunteers working with charities like Knoxville-based Remote Area Medical (RAM) provide free medical and dental care to Americans without jobs, employer-based insurance or the ability to purchase private health insurance.

Selfless teams of physicians, dentists, nurses and medical students assembled from across the country volunteer for annual health fairs like those profiled by *60 Minutes*, *Bill Moyers Journal*, CNN, *Newsweek* and the *Los Angeles Times*. Thousands of patients camp out in cars and huddle under tents waiting for tooth extractions, fillings, eyeglasses, pap smears and medical exams they otherwise could not afford.

Tennessee's 1995 Volunteer Health Care Services Act grants waivers for physicians licensed out-of-state to provide health care on a non-fee basis when sponsored by organizations such as RAM (TN Code Title 63, Chapter 6). That is why RAM holds most of its health care "expeditions" in Tennessee. No comparable law exists in North Carolina.

A North Carolina Volunteer Health Care Services Act will encourage medical volunteer organizations to visit underserved areas and populations across North Carolina.

- North Carolina's budget gap is estimated at over \$4 billion. North Carolina's unemployment rate sits at 11% (Bureau of Labor Statistics). 19.3% statewide have no health insurance (Gallop). 23.1% have no health insurance in WNC (NC-11).
- The 10th annual free health fair at the Wise County, VA fairgrounds in July provided an estimated \$1.6 million in health care to 2715 patients (5,600 patient encounters) – **at no cost to state taxpayers** – relieving the burden on state and local health care agencies. DNC Chair, Virginia Gov. Tim Kaine attended and registered patients.
- The week-long Los Angeles free health fair (August 2009) treated 6,300 patients, and provided an estimated \$2.8 million in health care services.
- Another free health fair is planned for October 3-4 in Grundy, VA, home town of North Carolina Governor Beverly Perdue.

### Support passage of Volunteer Health Care Services Act in North Carolina.

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