

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2007

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HOUSE BILL 2420

Short Title: Funds for Debt Service/AGAPE Community Health. (Public)

Sponsors: Representative Williams.

Referred to: Appropriations.

May 26, 2008

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1
2 AN ACT TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS TO METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY
3 HEALTH SERVICES, INC., FOR THE LIQUIDATION OF CONSTRUCTION
4 DEBT SERVICES FOR THE NEW AGAPE COMMUNITY HEALTH CLINIC
5 MEDICAL FACILITY PUT INTO OPERATION ON MAY 2, 2006, IN
6 BEAUFORT COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA.

7 Whereas, Metropolitan Community Health Services constructed a new
8 medical facility to operate the Agape Community Health Clinic, which provides
9 state-of-the-art medical services and access to primary health care for the regions low-
10 income, uninsured, and underinsured population; and

11 Whereas, the Agape Community Health Clinic is the only provider of primary
12 health care services for low-income, underinsured, and uninsured patients in the county,
13 which is a designated Medically Underserved Area (MUA) and a designated Health
14 Professional Shortage Area (HPSA), and where 40% of the county population has
15 incomes below 200% of the federal poverty level; and

16 Whereas, Metropolitan Community Health Services, Inc., secured federal
17 funding for the operation of a federally qualified community health clinic under the
18 Public Health Service Act, 42 U.S.C. 6A, but had no permanent facility to offer primary
19 medical services to those in need; and

20 Whereas, Metropolitan Community Health Services, Inc., raised most of the
21 funds necessary to construct a state-of-the-art medical facility with the exception of a
22 shortfall of \$500,000; and

23 Whereas, the debt service for the amount owing causes Metropolitan
24 Community Health Services, Inc., to have to allocate funds that would otherwise be
25 designated to offering primary health care services to more medically underserved
26 patients seeking medical care of which 68% are medically indigent; and

27 Whereas, The Agape Clinic cannot sustain the high debt service of the
28 construction loan in an environment where it is providing essential medical services to
29 patients who cannot afford to pay for the cost of care; Now, therefore,

1 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

2 **SECTION 1.(a)** Funds appropriated in subsection (b) of this section shall be
3 for the elimination of the remaining construction debt service incurred in the
4 construction of the Agape Community Health Clinic ("clinic") facility at 120 W. Martin
5 Luther King Drive, Washington, North Carolina, in Beaufort County currently
6 operational since May 2, 2006. The purpose of the clinic is to provide the
7 state-of-the-art facility wherein comprehensive primary medical care, treatment, health
8 screenings, pharmaceutical services, diagnostic imaging services, and dental services
9 can be made accessible in a central location for access by low-income at-risk county
10 residents regardless of ability to pay through the provision of federal operating funds
11 which make the services possible. The clinic provides training opportunities for
12 medical and nursing students in a community-based setting. The clinic provides the
13 region's first indigent pharmaceutical assistance program, dental clinic, health
14 information services, and comprehensive primary and preventive medical care,
15 including minor surgical procedures, mental health care, internal medicine and pediatric
16 care, radiology services, preventive and restorative dental services, laboratory services,
17 and health information services. The Agape Community Health Clinic works
18 collaboratively with the Beaufort County Hospital, the Brody School of Medicine,
19 Beaufort Community College Nursing Program, the North Carolina Community Health
20 Center Association, North Carolina Office of Rural Health and the North Carolina
21 Office of Minority Health under the North Carolina Department of Health and Human
22 Services, as well as the HRSA Bureau of Primary Health Care at the federal level and
23 the North Carolina Health and Wellness Trust Fund to provide health services to meet
24 the needs of the low-income medically indigent in the region. It should be noted that
25 none of this would be possible without a new modern facility in which to house the
26 delivery of health care services.

27 **SECTION 1.(b)** There is appropriated from the General Fund to
28 Metropolitan Community Health Services, Inc., the sum of five hundred thousand
29 dollars (\$500,000) for the 2008-2009 fiscal year. These funds shall be used to eliminate
30 the remaining construction debt service so that the Agape Clinic may utilize all of its
31 financial resources to expand the delivery of primary medical care to those most in need
32 of the services. Funds appropriated under this section provide twenty-nine percent
33 (29%) of the total construction costs required to construct the Agape Community Health
34 Clinic.

35 **SECTION 2.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2008.