

HB280 INTRODUCED



1 HB280
2 CX3CBQQ-1
3 By Representative Bolton
4 RFD: Ways and Means General Fund
5 First Read: 20-Jan-26



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4 SYNOPSIS:

5 This bill would establish the Alabama Health
6 Command as an independent agency tasked with
7 designating a virtual AI-assisted health platform that
8 may be used in conjunction with rural hospitals,
9 clinics, and health care clinicians that allows
10 consumers in rural areas of the state to connect with a
11 rural health care provider and receive other
12 health-related services, such as wellness education and
13 follow-up assistance, in a virtual encounter.

14 This bill would require the Alabama Health
15 Command to establish standards to ensure patient
16 privacy and ensure the platform does not provide any
17 practice that constitutes the practice of a health care
18 profession.

19 This bill would also exempt rural hospitals and
20 other rural health care providers and state health
21 institutions that contract to use the virtual
22 AI-assisted health platform from competitive bid laws.

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25 A BILL

26 TO BE ENTITLED

27 AN ACT



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29 Relating to rural health care; to establish the Alabama
30 Health Command to designate an entity to develop a virtual
31 AI-assisted health platform to provide certain health care
32 services to consumers in rural areas of the state; to require
33 the Alabama Health Command to establish certain standards; and
34 to exempt rural health care providers that contract to use the
35 virtual AI-assisted health platform from competitive bid laws.

36 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

37 Section 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of
38 the following:

39 (1) The state is facing a number of challenges in its
40 ability to deliver quality health care in rural communities
41 across the state.

42 (2) AI-based technologies hold promising potential in
43 providing basic health and wellness information and
44 educational material to rural patients, connecting patients
45 with rural health care providers, and answering general
46 questions that can be handled outside the clinical setting.

47 (3) A system of providing for virtual encounters with
48 patients using an avatar-based technology would facilitate
49 meaningful communication with a patient and provide ease of
50 access for the patient to connect with an appropriate rural
51 health care provider.

52 (4) To the extent federal funds are made available to
53 rural health care providers earmarked for rural health care
54 initiatives, whether through the Rural Health Transformation
55 Program or from other grants from the Centers for Medicare and
56 Medicaid Services, Health Resources Services Administration,



57 or Department of Health and Human Services, having a uniform,
58 interoperable avatar-based virtual encounter system available
59 to all rural health care providers will position the state as
60 a leader in transforming the delivery of rural health care
61 services.

62 (5) Sustainable delivery of rural health care services
63 increasingly depends on the ability of health systems to
64 leverage modern digital platforms that support education,
65 navigation, and health-related partnerships aligned with
66 patient needs.

67 Section 2. (a) As used in this section, the following
68 terms have the following meanings:

69 (1) AVATAR-BASED VIRTUAL ENCOUNTER SYSTEM. A digital,
70 interactive platform that enables a consumer to participate in
71 a virtual health-related encounter through one or more
72 computer-generated avatars representing an automated
73 interface, a participating health care provider, a user, or a
74 partner institution tethered together within a single, unified
75 visual environment. The system presents the consumer
76 interaction together with identifying information of
77 participating rural or remote health care providers,
78 accreditation indicators, or other authorized entities, and
79 may link or tether avatar interactions to health-related data
80 for the purposes of health management services, navigation,
81 education, referral, and the contextual presentation of
82 health-related information, resources, or promotions relevant
83 to the consumer's needs. The term does not include the
84 diagnosis, treatment, or prescription of medical conditions

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85 and does not, without connection to a licensed clinician,
86 constitute the practice of a health care profession.

87 (2) DEVELOPER. The business entity that develops the
88 virtual AI-assisted health platform that is designated by the
89 Alabama Health Command pursuant to subsection (c).

90 (3) HEALTH MANAGEMENT SERVICES. Includes services
91 relating to health research; wellness and prevention
92 education; record management; scheduling of appointments;
93 connecting or navigating a consumer to a rural health care
94 provider; providing consumers access to escalation options,
95 including connecting access for telehealth interactions with
96 rural health care providers; recommending that a consumer seek
97 emergency care; and routine follow-up assistance. The term
98 does not include treating or diagnosing illnesses or medical
99 conditions.

100 (4) RURAL HEALTH CARE PROVIDER. A rural hospital, rural
101 health clinic, other licensed rural health care facility, or
102 any licensed clinician practicing in a rural area of the
103 state.

104 (b) (1) The Alabama Health Command is created for the
105 purpose of designating an entity to develop, along with
106 providing standards and qualifications for the utilization of,
107 a virtual AI-assisted health platform to be instituted in
108 rural communities throughout the state.

109 (2) The Alabama Health Command shall be an agency that
110 acts independently under the direction and authority of a
111 director who shall be appointed by and serve at the pleasure
112 of the Governor. The director must have a knowledge of



113 AI-based technology platforms and shall be responsible for
114 administering and implementing this section. The director may
115 employ or contract with individuals as needed to carry out
116 these responsibilities.

117 (c) The Alabama Health Command shall designate a
118 business entity that is headquartered in the state to develop
119 a uniform, interoperable, virtual AI-assisted health platform
120 that may be used throughout the state to provide
121 consumer-initiated, health management services in rural
122 communities. The platform must have the capability of using a
123 patented avatar-based virtual encounter system.

124 (d) The Alabama Health Command shall establish
125 standards that:

126 (1) Ensure that the developer of the platform holds the
127 necessary patent or legal or licensing rights to the platform
128 and related technologies;

129 (2) Provide for the sharing and transfer of health data
130 while protecting patient privacy, including certification of
131 electronic health records, interoperability, algorithm
132 transparency, and other information sharing;

133 (3) Incorporate guardrails to prevent consumers from
134 receiving misinformation and to prevent the platform from
135 offering or providing any service that would be considered the
136 practice of health care by a professional licensed under Title
137 34, Code of Alabama 1975; and

138 (4) Any other standards the director determines are
139 necessary to protect consumers while optimizing and leveraging
140 available technologies to promote efficient delivery of health

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141 management services.

142 (e) Any rural health care provider or state health
143 institution that contracts to use the virtual AI-assisted
144 health platform developed pursuant to subsection (c) is exempt
145 from Article 5 of Chapter 4 of Title 41 and Chapter 16 of
146 Title 41, Code of Alabama 1975.

147 Section 3. This act shall become effective on October
148 1, 2026.