

Regular Session, 2010

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 133

BY REPRESENTATIVE MICHAEL JACKSON

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To express support for the Louisiana Commission on HIV, AIDS, and Hepatitis C and the Louisiana AIDS Advocacy Network in requesting urgent disbursement of additional federal funding for Louisiana AIDS Drug Assistance Programs.

WHEREAS, the United States faces a major public health crisis for low-income persons living with HIV or AIDS due to the insufficient funding of more than a dozen state AIDS Drug Assistance Programs (ADAPs) and the subsequent implementation of cost containment measures or closures within these programs; and

WHEREAS, access to antiretroviral medications provided through state ADAPs has been demonstrated to slow HIV disease progression, enhance the quality of life of persons living with HIV, delay the onset of AIDS, and extend life; and

WHEREAS, a low viral burden has also been associated with a reduced rate of HIV transmission; and

WHEREAS, the Louisiana office of public health HIV/AIDS Program has already implemented cost containment measures in excess of two million dollars and still faces a significant budget deficit for the state's ADAP; and

WHEREAS, in the past twelve months, as a result of stagnant levels of federal funding, rising unemployment, and aggressive HIV testing initiatives funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Louisiana ADAP has experienced a fifteen percent increase in the overall number of unduplicated clients served; a seventeen percent increase in average antiretroviral medication cost per client; a twenty-two percent increase in utilization of services; and a thirty-two percent increase in overall program expenditures; and

WHEREAS, these trends of increasing client utilization and program costs do not show signs of reversing; and

WHEREAS, the level of federal funds available has not kept pace with the increase in client utilization of state ADAPs, creating a need for additional funding on an emergency basis; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana may be forced to cap new enrollment to the state's ADAP without such funds; and

WHEREAS, such a limitation would create barriers to Louisianians accessing life-prolonging medications and will potentially increase HIV-related morbidity and mortality in this state; and

WHEREAS, according to the CDC's 2007 HIV/AIDS Surveillance Report, Volume 19, Louisiana ranked fifth highest among all states in AIDS case rates and eleventh highest among all states in the number of AIDS cases diagnosed in 2007; and

WHEREAS, as also identified in this CDC report, New Orleans ranked second highest in AIDS case rates among the largest United States metropolitan areas and Baton Rouge ranked third highest.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby support the Louisiana Commission on HIV, AIDS, and Hepatitis C and the Louisiana AIDS Advocacy Network in requesting urgent disbursement of additional federal funding for the Louisiana AIDS Drug Assistance Program.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that in taking this action, the Legislature of Louisiana intends to mitigate the effects of cost containment measures in the Louisiana AIDS Drug Assistance Program and prevent the further limitation or closure of this program.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the Louisiana Commission on HIV, AIDS, and Hepatitis C and to the Louisiana AIDS Advocacy Network.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE