

Regular Session, 2014

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 88

BY REPRESENTATIVE SIMON

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To create the Task Force on Telehealth Access as an advisory body to the legislature and the Department of Health and Hospitals on policies and practices that expand access to telehealth services, and to direct the task force to report to the governor and the legislature on the status of telehealth access in Louisiana.

WHEREAS, the term "telemedicine" refers to the use of medical information exchanged from one site to another via electronic communications to improve the health of a patient; and

WHEREAS, as an innovative form of health care, telemedicine is extremely valuable because it enhances access to care, particularly in rural locations and other medically underserved areas; makes delivery of care more cost-effective; and distributes limited provider resources more efficiently; and

WHEREAS, many patients with limited access to traditional health care can be diagnosed and treated sooner through telemedicine than they would be otherwise, resulting in improved outcomes and less costly treatments due to early detection and prevention; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana law, R.S. 37:1271(B)(2), provides that any person authorized to practice telemedicine shall ensure that a licensed health care professional who can adequately examine the patient and diagnose illness is in the examination room with the patient at the time telemedicine services are delivered; and

WHEREAS, while requiring the physical presence of a second health care professional with a patient in the practice of telemedicine is important for patient safety and quality of treatment, this requirement also represents a barrier to care for persons who could access a physician quickly through electronic means but could not also access a provider in person at the same time; and

WHEREAS, the term "telehealth" encompasses telemedicine as well as other health services which can be provided remotely through communication technologies; and

WHEREAS, common examples of telehealth services in practice include primary care, medical specialty consultations, behavioral health services, and home monitoring of chronic disease; and

WHEREAS, telehealth services could potentially address a great unmet need for health care by persons who have limited access to both traditional health care settings and to telemedicine as currently defined in Louisiana law; and

WHEREAS, if our state is to achieve much needed improvement in health outcomes, a prudent and responsible policy for doing so would be to balance patient safety and access to care through expanding access by Louisianians to telehealth services.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby create the Task Force on Telehealth Access.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall be composed of the following members:

(1) Two members appointed by the secretary of the Department of Health and Hospitals, at least one of whom shall be an employee in the bureau of primary care and rural health.

(2) The executive director of the Louisiana State Board of Medical Examiners or his designee.

(3) A representative of the Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center at New Orleans.

(4) A representative of the Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center at Shreveport.

(5) A representative of the Tulane University School of Medicine.

(6) A representative of the Louisiana State Medical Society.

(7) A representative of the Louisiana Primary Care Association.

(8) A representative of the Louisiana Health Care Quality Forum.

(9) A representative of the HomeCare Association of Louisiana.

(10) A representative of the Louisiana Hospital Association.

(11) A representative of the Louisiana Association of Health Plans.

(12) A representative of the Louisiana Cable and Telecommunications Association.

(13) A representative of the TexLa Telehealth Resource Center.

(14) A representative of the Louisiana Association of Nurse Practitioners.

(15) The secretary of the Department of Public Safety and Corrections or his designee.

(16) A representative of Ochsner Health System.

(17) A representative of Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center.

(18) A representative of the Louisiana Rural Hospital Coalition, Inc.

(19) A representative of the Louisiana Ambulance Alliance.

(20) A representative of the Louisiana Nursing Home Association.

(21) A representative of the Louisiana Academy of Medical Psychologists.

(22) A representative of the Louisiana Psychiatric Medical Association.

(23) The executive director of the Louisiana State Board of Nursing or his designee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the secretary of the Department of Health and Hospitals shall take such actions as are necessary to ensure that the initial convening of the task force occurs on or before September 1, 2014.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall select a chairman from among its members.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the members of the task force shall serve without compensation, except per diem or expense reimbursement to which they may be individually entitled by their respective employer organizations.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the functions of the task force shall include all of the following:

(1) Serve as an advisory body to the legislature and the Department of Health and Hospitals on policies and practices that expand access to and coverage for telehealth services in a manner that ensures quality of care and patient safety.

(2) Serve as a coordinating forum on telehealth-related matters between and among state agencies, local government, and other nongovernmental groups.

(3) Study technical aspects of delivery systems utilized in telehealth, and develop basic standards based upon such study to recommend to the governor, the legislature, and the secretary of the Department of Health and Hospitals concerning modalities and features of telehealth delivery systems.

(4) On a regular basis, research and review state regulations, guidelines, policies, and procedures that pertain in any way to telehealth and make policy recommendations to the governor, the legislature, and the secretary of the Department of Health and Hospitals.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that on or before January 1, 2015, and semiannually thereafter, the task force shall prepare and submit to the governor and the legislature a report on the status of telehealth access in Louisiana.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall terminate on September 1, 2018.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the secretary of the Department of Health and Hospitals.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE