

Regular Session, 2012

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 96

BY REPRESENTATIVE SIMON

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To urge and request the Department of Health and Hospitals to study means by which to expand access by Louisianians to telehealth services and to report its findings to the legislative committees on health and welfare.

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 urge and request the Department of Health and Hospitals to study means by which to expand access by Louisianians to telehealth services.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that in developing the study, the department shall engage, collaborate with, and obtain information and perspective from stakeholder groups with appropriate expertise, including but not limited to the following organizations:

- (1) The health care services division of the Louisiana State University System.
- (2) The Tulane University School of Medicine.
- (3) The Louisiana State Medical Society.
- (4) The Louisiana Primary Care Association.
- (5) The Louisiana Health Care Quality Forum.
- (6) The HomeCare Association of Louisiana.
- (7) The Louisiana Hospital Association.
- (8) The Louisiana Association of Health Plans.
- (9) The Louisiana Cable and Telecommunications Association.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the department shall provide the findings of this study in the form of a report to the House Committee on Health and Welfare and the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare on or before December 31, 2012.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the secretary of the Department of Health and Hospitals, the president of the Louisiana State University System, the dean of the Tulane University School of Medicine, the president of the Louisiana State Medical Society, the executive director of the Louisiana Primary Care

Association, the executive director of the Louisiana Health Care Quality Forum, the chief executive officer of the HomeCare Association of Louisiana, the president of the Louisiana Hospital Association, the chief executive officer of the Louisiana Association of Health Plans, and the chief executive officer of the Louisiana Cable and Telecommunications Association.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE