

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 39

BY SENATORS ALLAIN, BARROW, BOUDREAUX, CARTER, HENSGENS, LUNEAU, MCMATH, FRED MILLS AND POPE AND REPRESENTATIVES ADAMS, BAGLEY, ECHOLS, MCMAHEN, DUSTIN MILLER, PRESSLY, SCHLEGEL AND STAGNI

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To urge and request the Louisiana Department of Health to study and develop a proposal for a statewide patient movement plan that identifies load-balancing practices for use during declared disasters, and to submit a report to the House and Senate committees on health and welfare and the House and Senate select committees on homeland security.

WHEREAS, the Louisiana Department of Health is the lead agency for our state's public health and medical services emergency support function during disaster and emergency periods, commonly known and classified by the state emergency operations plan as ESF-8; and

WHEREAS, it is appropriate for the Louisiana Department of Health to lead the development of a statewide patient movement plan that identifies load-balancing practices that can be utilized in the immediate response to a declared disaster; and

WHEREAS, hospitals are an indispensable part of our state's emergency response infrastructure and it is in the best interest of the state to ensure that all hospital resources and capacity in the state are effectively optimized during the response to a declared emergency to address surges in demand for hospital care, whether from a pandemic or a natural disaster; and

WHEREAS, hospital load-balancing practices may involve prehospital distribution of patients among area healthcare facilities, transferring patients from overwhelmed healthcare facilities to ones with more capacity, including but not limited to space, staffing, and equipment, or moving resources to support an overwhelmed facility; and

WHEREAS, through the use of hospital load-balancing practices across healthcare

facilities and systems, the state can help ensure that the highest possible level of care is provided to each patient during a response to a declared disaster.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the Louisiana Department of Health to study and develop a proposal for a statewide patient movement plan that identifies load-balancing practices for use during declared disasters, and to submit a report to the House and Senate committees on health and welfare and the House and Senate select committees on homeland security.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, in conducting the study and developing the statewide patient movement plan, the Louisiana Department of Health shall work in conjunction with all relevant stakeholders, including but not limited to the following:

- (1) The Louisiana Emergency Response Network.
- (2) The bureau of emergency medical services.
- (3) The Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness.
- (4) The Rural Hospital Coalition.
- (5) The Louisiana Hospital Association.
- (6) Providers of dialysis services.
- (7) The Louisiana State Medical Society.
- (8) The Louisiana Ambulance Alliance.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the statewide patient movement plan shall provide for the following key functions:

(1) Convening hospitals for the sharing of situational information, including current contingency measures and potential need for load-balancing, and for the negotiation of load-balancing.

(2) Establishment of a one-call referral line to achieve rapid placement of patients needing critical care, particularly when the referring hospital does not provide the required services, including but not limited to emergency dialysis, multi-organ failure support, and management of acute respiratory distress syndrome.

(3) Directing secondary referrals to the most appropriate hospital with consideration given to the proximity of the patient to the hospital and facilities with capacity or the most appropriate facility for the patient's care given the patient's condition.

(4) Establishment of and continued support for a clinical consultant charged with assisting in the development of policy and to oversee medical aspects of the operation by using patients' medical information to help prioritize and determine which destinations are most appropriate.

(5) Establishment and maintenance of the ability to provide consultation with specialty medical providers when required to help prioritize a patient for transfer or receive instructions for care-in-place when this is required for a period of time.

(6) Provisions for appropriate management of load-balancing between overwhelmed facilities and those with more overall capacity.

(7) Addressing how transportation, whether by emergency medical services or otherwise, will be integrated into the transfer decision-making process, particularly in situations where specialized transportation may be needed or there may be competition for critical care ground or air assets that requires prioritization between patients. This integration includes ensuring that transportation providers receive appropriate reimbursement for the ambulance and staff time spent on transfers through all available funding sources including state emergency funding, activation of ambulance strike teams, or use of ambulances through the federal ambulance contract, and requiring payors to provide reimbursement for these services when conditions indicate a benefit to the patient from transfer due to surge conditions at the facility of origin.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Louisiana Department of Health shall submit the proposal for a statewide patient movement plan to the House and Senate committees on health and welfare, the House and Senate select committees on homeland security, and the David R. Poynter Legislative Research Library no later than sixty days prior to the convening of the 2023 Regular Session.

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

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES