

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 162

BY SENATOR BROOME

A RESOLUTION

To urge and request the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals and the division of administration to report to the Senate and House committees on health and welfare why the operation of the Mental Health Emergency Room Extension (MHERE) previously in operation from 2010 through 2013 at the Earl K. Long Medical Center was not continued upon privatization of that hospital, and how such services will be resumed in the community of Baton Rouge.

WHEREAS, from January 2010 through April 2013, the publicly operated Earl K. Long Medical Center, assisted by the Capital Area Human Services District, operated a Mental Health Emergency Room Extension (MHERE); and

WHEREAS, this Mental Health Emergency Room Extension served as a ten-to-fifteen bed crisis receiving center where specialized staff provided a high level of screening and assessment to people in behavioral health crises, in order to accurately connect those patients to either acute or ongoing community-based treatment to diminish the recurrent need for crisis services; and

WHEREAS, this MHERE served as a crisis continuum component that assisted law enforcement, hospital emergency departments, and jails, as well as public and private sector budgets, in dealing with increasing deinstitutionalization; the effects of increasing substance abuse; and helping those returning to our communities from active combat; and

WHEREAS, within two years of operating ten to fifteen beds at a time at an annual operational cost of one-point-six million dollars, this MHERE served more than thirty-four hundred patients and saved the state more than twenty-point-six million dollars by avoiding hospitalizations for more than sixty-five percent of the patients admitted to the MHERE; and

WHEREAS, in April 2013, with the privatization of the Earl K. Long Medical Center, the MHERE was shut down and no longer operates in Baton Rouge; and

WHEREAS, now other local hospital emergency rooms and parish prison facilities are seeing a significant increase in admittance of people in behavioral health and substance abuse disorder crises; and

WHEREAS, the original February 5, 2010, cooperative endeavor agreement entered into by the state of Louisiana, through the division of administration and the Department of Health and Hospitals, during the privatization of the Earl K. Long Medical Center, provided that the state would work cooperatively with the Capital Area Human Services District and the Department of Health and Hospitals, office of mental health to address the ongoing provision of mental health services in the service area.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the Department of Health and Hospitals and the division of administration to investigate and, on or before September 1, 2014, report to the Senate and House committees on health and welfare why the Mental Health Emergency Room Extension or a comparable facility was not continued in the privatization of the Earl K. Long Medical Center, and how the department and the division plan to ensure that those services are resumed in the community of Baton Rouge.

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

---

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE