

RÉSUMÉ DIGEST

ACT 859 (HB 971)

2026 Regular Session

Stagni

Existing law defines a rural health clinic as a facility that provides primary healthcare services to outpatients located in an area that is not an urbanized area as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau.

New law requires the secretary of the La. Dept. of Health (LDH) to take all necessary actions to equalize Medicaid reimbursement rates between independent rural health clinics and provider-based rural health clinics.

New law provides for an increase in the encounter rate for independent rural health clinics for fiscal years 2026-2027 and 2028-2029 subject to approval by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

Existing law requires LDH to administer a facility need review process to determine whether a public need exists for additional healthcare facilities. Existing law further provides that certain healthcare facilities must demonstrate such a public need before LDH will issue a license for the facility.

New law adds types one and two rural health clinics to the list of healthcare facilities required to undergo facility need review prior to the issuance of a license for operation.

New law requires LDH to submit a monthly report to the legislature providing the number of encounters and monthly expenditures for each type one rural health clinic.

New law requires LDH to take any necessary action to implement the provisions of new law not later than 90 days after the effective date of new law, including filing a Medicaid state plan amendment or promulgating and adopting rules.

Effective upon a specific appropriation of funds by the legislature.

Effective upon signature of governor (June 8, 2026).

(Adds R.S. 40:2116(B)(8) and 2197.1)