

2024 Regular Session

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 114

BY REPRESENTATIVE MARCELLE

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To create a task force to study the potential expansion of behavioral healthcare providers who are eligible for enhanced Medicaid reimbursement.

WHEREAS, it is critical for this legislature to address the mental health crisis in this state; and

WHEREAS, many Louisiana residents who suffer with mental health disorders are Medicaid enrollees; and

WHEREAS, in 2022, the office of behavioral health within the Louisiana Department of Health introduced the Louisiana Crisis Response System in an effort to address the mental health issues of Medicaid recipients in this state; and

WHEREAS, the Louisiana Crisis Response System focused on expanding services to Louisiana Medicaid members experiencing a mental health crisis with the phased implementation of a comprehensive crisis system of care; and

WHEREAS, individuals age twenty-one and older who are served by one of the five Medicaid Healthy Louisiana plans and experiencing emotional distress were granted access to a continuum of voluntary crisis services through the implementation of the program; and

WHEREAS, such voluntary crisis services are built on principles of recovery and aim to divert from unnecessary hospitalizations and institutional levels of care; and

WHEREAS, the program encompasses services via Mobile Crisis Response, Community Brief Crisis Support, Behavioral Health Crisis Care, and Crisis Stabilization; and

WHEREAS, services for the program are active in the Greater New Orleans region, the Greater Baton Rouge region, the South-Central Louisiana region, the Northwest Louisiana region, and Jefferson Parish; and

WHEREAS, although the efforts of the Louisiana Crisis Response System do not go unnoticed, the residents in this state are still facing challenges with mental health; and

WHEREAS, further expansion of the pool of behavioral healthcare providers eligible for enhanced Medicaid dollars may aid the state in addressing this matter; and

WHEREAS, the inclusion of healthcare providers with a master of social work and other master's-level behavioral healthcare providers, including but not limited to mental health counselors, may also help the statewide epidemic; and

WHEREAS, it is the duty of this legislature to consider expanding the pool of behavioral healthcare providers who are eligible for enhanced Medicaid dollars and potentially including other healthcare providers in its expansion.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby create a task force to study the potential expansion of behavioral healthcare providers who are eligible for enhanced Medicaid reimbursement.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall consist of members from the following associations, boards, departments, and organizations:

- (1) The president of the Louisiana School Psychologist Association or his designee.
- (2) The president of the Louisiana Association of School Social Workers or his designee.
- (3) A member of the Legislative Youth Advisory Council in Louisiana who shall be appointed by the chair of the Louisiana Commission on Civic Education.
- (4) The secretary of the Louisiana Department of Health or his designee.
- (5) The superintendent of the Louisiana Department of Education or his designee.
- (6) The administrator of the Louisiana State Board of Social Work Examiners or his designee.
- (7) The president of the Louisiana Counseling Association or his designee.
- (8) The president of the Louisiana Association of Child Welfare and Attendance or his designee.
- (9) The president of the Louisiana State Nurses Association or his designee.
- (10) The executive director of the Louisiana State Board of Examiners of Psychologists or his designee.
- (11) The chair of the Louisiana Behavior Analyst Board or his designee.
- (12) The president of the Louisiana School Counselors Association or his designee.
- (13) The president of the Louisiana Center for Health Equity or his designee.

(14) The executive director of the Louisiana State Board of Licensed Professional Counselors or his designee.

(15) The director of the Louisiana Managed Medicaid Association or his designee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that members of the task force shall study and provide information and recommendations on the following:

(1) The number of counseling staff in schools, which shall include a determination of how many of those persons are social workers, guidance counselors, nurses, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, and psychologists delineated by full-time and part-time staff equivalency and contractual staff equivalency or time allocation.

(2) The feasibility of staffing at least one social worker per school.

(3) The feasibility of establishing certain educational programs or incentives to bring more mental health counselors into the workforce, which shall include counselors who have completed a dual degree program for mental health counseling and board-certified behavioral analysis and the like.

(4) The potential effects of changing recommended guidelines for schools to specify that the recommended ratio applies exclusively to mental health professionals and not guidance counselors for academics.

(5) The potential outcome of creating nurse advice lines to expand access to an initial source of non-emergency care, including for behavioral health, as part of the continuum of supports available for Medicaid beneficiaries.

(6) Recommendations for initiatives to bolster guidance, oversight, and enforcement of existing laws to ensure those in the behavioral health workforce are reimbursed equitably when compared to their peers in the healthcare workforce, specifically regarding insurance reimbursement.

(7) Recommendations for initiatives to foster alignment among payors, through public-private partnerships, to promote meaningful financial incentives and remove administrative burdens, such as excessive paperwork and complex requirements for joining health insurance networks and getting approvals from insurers as part of necessary care.

(8) Recommendations for incentives to encourage persons to enter the behavioral health workforce in underserved areas, which shall include but not be limited to scholarships and loan forgiveness.

(9) The pay and structural barriers to entering and remaining in the behavioral health workforce, specifically for populations that are currently underrepresented, such as educational practices that discourage participation by those that are socioeconomically disadvantaged.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Louisiana Department of Health shall provide staff support to the task force.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the chairman and vice chairman of the task force shall be elected by a majority of the task force members at its first meeting, which shall be held no later than July 31, 2024. During the first meeting of the task force, its members may select other officers as they deem appropriate.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force meetings shall be held monthly and the final report of findings and policy recommendations from the task force shall be submitted in the form of a written report to the House and Senate committees on health and welfare no later than February 28, 2025.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the president of the Louisiana School Psychologist Association, the president of the Louisiana Association of School Social Workers, the chair of the Louisiana Commission on Civic Education, the secretary of the Louisiana Department of Health, the Louisiana State Superintendent of Education of the Louisiana Department of Education, the administrator of the Louisiana State Board of Social Work Examiners, the president of the Louisiana Counseling Association, the president of the Louisiana Association of Child Welfare and Attendance, the president of the Louisiana State Nurses Association, the executive director of the Louisiana State Board of Examiners of Psychologists, the chair of the Louisiana Behavior Analyst Board, the president of the Louisiana School Counselors Association, the president of the Louisiana Center for Health Equity, the executive director of the Louisiana State Board of Licensed Professional Counselors, and the director of the Louisiana Managed Medicaid Association.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE