

2025 Regular Session

SENATE BILL NO. 102

BY SENATOR ALLAIN

Prefiled pursuant to Article III, Section 2(A)(4)(b)(i) of the Constitution of Louisiana.

HEALTH CARE. Provides relative to obstetric care. (gov sig)

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AN ACT

To enact R.S. 40:1124.3, relative to obstetric care; to provide for legislative intent; to provide for access to obstetric care; to provide for duties of the Louisiana Department of Health; to provide for an effective date; and to provide for related matters.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

Section 1. R.S. 40:1124.3 is hereby enacted to read as follows:

§1124.3. Access to obstetric care

A. The legislature finds and declares the following:

(1) According to the March of Dimes, nearly one-third of parishes in Louisiana are defined as maternity care deserts, which means there are no obstetric providers and no hospitals or birth centers offering obstetric care.

(2) Although pregnant women may have health insurance coverage through either private insurance or Medicaid, that coverage is meaningless if there are no obstetric providers in the area to take care of the pregnant woman.

(3) Pregnant women in some rural areas of the state have to travel up to an hour to reach an obstetric provider. In emergency situations, the travel time

1 can be the difference between life and death for the pregnant woman and her
2 unborn child.

3 (4) Louisiana has one of the highest maternal and infant mortality rates
4 in the United States, and as hospitals continue to close their obstetric units, the
5 number and severity of these maternal care deserts will continue to increase as
6 will the maternal and infant mortality rates.

7 (5) Medicaid spending increases significantly each year, with the
8 proposed Medicaid budget for Fiscal Year 2025-2026 at approximately nineteen
9 billion dollars. However, access to care and health outcomes continue to
10 decrease.

11 (6) With the amount of Medicaid funding at the Louisiana Department
12 of Health's disposal and an entire program office dedicated to women's health,
13 the department has the financial means and policy acumen to prioritize
14 maternal and fetal health in Louisiana and ensure that women throughout the
15 state have access to obstetric services.

16 B. The Louisiana Department of Health shall ensure that obstetric
17 services are available throughout the state and that no more than thirty miles
18 shall exist between each obstetric provider. The department shall utilize
19 Medicaid funds to provide funding for hospitals to provide obstetric services at
20 hospitals or satellite clinics.

21 Section 2. This Act shall become effective upon signature by the governor or, if not
22 signed by the governor, upon expiration of the time for bills to become law without signature
23 by the governor, as provided by Article III, Section 18 of the Constitution of Louisiana. If
24 vetoed by the governor and subsequently approved by the legislature, this Act shall become
25 effective on the day following such approval.

