

2025 Regular Session

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 55

BY REPRESENTATIVE MILLER

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To continue the Health Disparities in Rural Areas Task Force created in the 2022 Regular Session of the Legislature of Louisiana pursuant to House Concurrent Resolution No. 44 to identify and study key health issues affecting rural areas and develop strategies to improve health outcomes for rural and underserved communities and to submit a written report to the House and Senate committees on health and welfare by February 1, 2026.

WHEREAS, according to the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, overall health outcomes for African Americans, Hispanic Americans, and American Indians in this country are far poorer than for white people; and

WHEREAS, vast health disparities persist in this country, particularly in rural areas, and many have worsened during the COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, rural areas comprise roughly eighty percent of Louisiana's total geographic area; and

WHEREAS, nearly twenty-nine percent of our state's population, totaling more than one million two hundred thousand Louisianans, live in rural communities; and

WHEREAS, sixty of Louisiana's sixty-four parishes are classified as health professional shortage areas according to the standards of the federal Health Resources and Services Administration; and

WHEREAS, approximately ninety-eight percent of this state's entire population lives in a federally designated health professional shortage area; and

WHEREAS, the vast majority of Louisiana's rural communities are medically underserved by all established measures, yet programs to address the healthcare needs of this population remain underfunded and few are guided by local stakeholders or locally conducted needs assessments; and

WHEREAS, in consideration of the findings set forth in this Resolution, the legislature hereby declares that improving health outcomes in rural communities is a critical public health priority of this state.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby continue the Health Disparities in Rural Areas Task Force.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, with the following exceptions, the membership and duties of the task force shall continue as provided in House Concurrent Resolution No. 44 of the 2022 Regular Session of the Legislature of Louisiana.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the membership of the task force shall include one member from the Clinicians of Color Working Group and one member of the Louisiana Managed Medicaid Association, appointed by the board of directors of the Louisiana Managed Medicaid Association.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall continue to be a subcommittee of the Statewide Health Equity Consortium within the Louisiana Department of Health.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Statewide Health Equity Consortium shall reconvene the meeting of the task force no later than August 15, 2025.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the members shall be given reasonable notice of the meetings of the Health Disparities in Rural Areas Task Force.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that any member who fails to attend two consecutive meetings shall subject to removal by a majority vote of the task force.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED if a member of the task force is removed, the chairperson may nominate a new member, who will become a member by majority vote of the current members of the task force.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force may adopt rules of procedure and any other policies as may be necessary to facilitate the work of the group.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that on or before February 1, 2026, the task force shall submit to the House Committee on Health and Welfare, the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare, and the David R. Poynter Legislative Research Library a report of its findings and recommendations.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the president of the board of directors and the director of clinical practice, health policy, and advocacy of the Louisiana State Nurses Association, the executive director of the Louisiana State Board of Nursing, the executive director of the Louisiana State Board of Medical Examiners, the dean of the Southern University School of Nursing, the president of the board of directors of the Louisiana Association of Nurse Practitioners, the chief executive officer of the Louisiana State Medical Society, the chief operating officer of the Rural Hospital Coalition, Inc., the president of the Louisiana Hospital Association, the executive director of the Louisiana Rural Health Association, the executive director of the Louisiana Primary Care Association, the secretary of the Louisiana Department of Health, the president of the board of directors of the Louisiana Managed Medicaid Association, the state director of AARP Louisiana, the president of the board of directors of the Louisiana Academy of Family Physicians, the president of the Louisiana Council of Administrators in Nursing Education, the president of the Black Nurses Association of Acadiana, and the president of the Louisiana Independent Pharmacies Association.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE