

2016 Regular Session

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 93

BY REPRESENTATIVE IVEY

SNAP/FOOD STAMPS: Requests a feasibility study of a prospective program to limit uses of SNAP benefits by Medicaid enrollees with certain health conditions

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

2 To authorize and request the Department of Health and Hospitals and the Department of
3 Children and Family Services, jointly, to study the desirability and feasibility of a
4 prospective program to limit uses of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
5 benefits by Medicaid enrollees with certain health conditions, and to report findings
6 of the study to the legislature.

7 WHEREAS, proper nutrition is a key to good health; and

8 WHEREAS, many health conditions can be worsened or improved by diet; and

9 WHEREAS, the program still commonly known as "food stamps" was renamed the
10 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in 2008; and

11 WHEREAS, SNAP, which is administered at the state level by the Louisiana
12 Department of Children and Family Services, is the largest of all federal food assistance
13 programs and provides support to needy households and to those making the transition from
14 welfare to work; and

15 WHEREAS, per federal policy, SNAP benefits may be used only for the purchase
16 of nonalcoholic beverages and food which is not hot at the point of sale, with virtually no
17 restrictions on foods and beverages within these broad categories that SNAP recipients may
18 purchase; and

19 WHEREAS, while a major purpose of the Food Stamp Act of 1964, which created
20 the program that became SNAP, was to fight hunger among the nation's poor, low-income
21 families of today are at least as likely to struggle with obesity as they are with hunger; and

1 WHEREAS, U.S. states and cities have become increasingly aware of the high costs
2 of chronic diseases resulting from obesity and other conditions related to diet that are borne
3 by public health systems, and have persisted in petitioning the federal government,
4 particularly over the past decade, to prohibit the purchase of unhealthy foods with SNAP
5 benefits in their jurisdictions through special waivers of otherwise applicable SNAP policy;
6 however, to date, no such waiver has been approved; and

7 WHEREAS, the groundswell of support among policymakers for prohibiting the
8 purchase of unhealthy foods with SNAP benefits is perhaps best explained in a succinct
9 quote by Dr. Kelly Brownell, dean of the Sanford School of Public Policy at Duke
10 University and internationally recognized expert on obesity, who has stated that "the
11 government should not be in the business of making people sick"; and

12 WHEREAS, Medicaid, which is administered at the state level by the Louisiana
13 Department of Health and Hospitals, is the nation's medical assistance program for low-
14 income individuals and families, and is the largest single item in the budget of this state; and

15 WHEREAS, at over eight billion three hundred eighty million dollars, Medicaid
16 comprises thirty-four and two tenths percent of Louisiana's total operating budget in the
17 present state fiscal year, and costs of this program continue to grow at an unsustainable rate;
18 and

19 WHEREAS, as documented in numerous state- and national-level studies, obesity
20 prevention and enhanced management of chronic diseases have the potential to produce vast
21 savings in the Medicaid program, as well as improve the overall health of the population
22 served by the program.

23 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby
24 authorize and request the Department of Health and Hospitals and the Department of
25 Children and Family Services, jointly, to study the desirability and feasibility of a
26 prospective program to limit uses of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits
27 by Medicaid enrollees with health conditions that are significantly impacted by diet.

28 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the primary duty of the Department of Health
29 and Hospitals in this study effort shall be to identify the cohort of Medicaid enrollees whose
30 health could be most significantly improved by diet, and that the primary duty of the

1 Department of Children and Family Services in this study effort shall be to examine the
2 feasibility of prohibiting the purchase of unhealthy foods with SNAP benefits by these
3 Medicaid enrollees.

4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Health and Hospitals and the
5 Department of Children and Family Services, jointly, shall develop a written report
6 addressing the feasibility and desirability of the prospective program detailed in this
7 Resolution, and shall submit the report to the House Committee on Health and Welfare and
8 the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare no later than sixty days prior to the convening
9 of the 2017 Regular Session of the Legislature of Louisiana.

10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the
11 secretary of the Department of Health and Hospitals and the secretary of the Department of
12 Children and Family Services.

DIGEST

The digest printed below was prepared by House Legislative Services. It constitutes no part of the legislative instrument. The keyword, one-liner, abstract, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

HCR 93 Engrossed

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Ivey

Authorizes and requests the Dept. of Health and Hospitals and the Dept. of Children and Family Services, jointly, to study the desirability and feasibility of a prospective program to limit uses of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits by Medicaid enrollees with certain health conditions, and to report findings of the study to the legislature.