

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 85

BY SENATOR MCMATH

A RESOLUTION

To commend Healthier Northshore for its efforts to improve overall health of the population in Louisiana Department of Health Region 9.

WHEREAS, Louisiana ranks at or near the bottom of most health outcome measures; and

WHEREAS, the state's population has high rates of obesity, alarming rates of vaping and tobacco use, and mortality rates from chronic illness like cancer and heart disease that are some of the highest in the country; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana Department of Health Region 9 contains the state's healthiest parish, St. Tammany Parish, and the state's least healthy parish, Washington Parish; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana Tumor Registry indicates that St. Tammany and Washington parishes have higher rates of cancer incidence than the rest of the state; Washington Parish has the highest prostate cancer mortality in the state, particularly among African-American males; and lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer-related death, accounting for more than breast, prostate and colorectal cancer deaths combined; and

WHEREAS, with COVID-19 lockdowns, patients have delayed or canceled annual screenings and, as such, more cancers are going undiagnosed, leading to anticipated increased mortality in the region; and

WHEREAS, taking the current public health situation into consideration, community health leaders in the St. Tammany Health System and Ochsner Health gathered a wide assortment of leaders in health care, community, civic, and government sectors to form Healthier Northshore, an advisory body focused on improving the overall health of the population of the region; and

WHEREAS, formed in September 2020, the council gathered renewed focus with the challenge Ochsner Health issued, announcing its goal to bring Louisiana from 49th in overall health to 40th by 2030; and

WHEREAS, Healthier Northshore will coalesce existing resources to address challenges that contribute to the current health standing of the region, focusing on residents of St. Tammany and Washington parishes, using the collaborative nature of hospitals, health companies, civic institutions, community groups, and elected officials as the catalysts for change; and

WHEREAS, Healthier Northshore focuses on the following:

(1) Teaching residents the benefits of good nutrition, regular physical activity, abstaining from nicotine consumption (vaping, smoking, chewing), and good mental health; and

(2) Offering opportunities to have biometric and cancer health screenings at community-based, employer-based, and public events; and

(3) Being a central point of information and resources for residents to connect people with resources including primary care resources, specialty resources, and social support resources; and

WHEREAS, it is appropriate to commend the efforts of the St. Tammany Health System and Ochsner Health together with health care, community, civic, and government sector leaders at Healthier Northshore.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby commend Healthier Northshore for its efforts to improve the overall health of the population in Louisiana Department of Health Region 9.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to Anne B. Pablovich, Community Health Coordinator, St. Tammany Health System.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE