

2021 Regular Session

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 76

BY REPRESENTATIVES EDMONDS AND TURNER

HEALTH/BEHAVIORAL: Urges and requests the La. Department of Health to convene an opioid action summit in 2021

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

2 To urge and request the Louisiana Department of Health to convene an opioid action summit
3 in 2021.

4 WHEREAS, drugs known as opioids include prescription pain medications, heroin,
5 and synthetic pharmaceuticals such as fentanyl and, for reasons relating to their chemical
6 composition and the physiology of the human brain, are among the most highly addictive
7 substances known to science; and

8 WHEREAS, the effects of opioid addiction can be devastating for families and
9 communities; and

10 WHEREAS, the National Institute on Drug Abuse of the National Institutes of Health
11 characterizes opioid abuse as a serious national crisis that affects public health as well as
12 social and economic welfare; and

13 WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that
14 the total economic burden of prescription opioid misuse in the United States, which
15 encompasses the costs of health care, lost productivity, addiction treatment, and criminal
16 justice involvement, is over seventy-eight billion dollars annually; and

17 WHEREAS, in a national vital statistics update issued in April of 2021, the CDC
18 reported that the number of drug overdose deaths in the Unites State rose at an alarming rate
19 during the COVID-19 pandemic, with more than eighty-seven thousand Americans dying
20 of drug overdoses from September of 2019 to September of 2020; the death toll in this

1 period represents the highest number of overdose deaths ever recorded in a year since the
2 opioid epidemic began in the 1990s; and

3 WHEREAS, the April, 2021 CDC update indicated that among all U.S. states and the
4 District of Columbia, Louisiana experienced the nation's second-largest annual increase in
5 drug overdose deaths (with a fifty-four percent increase) behind only the District of
6 Columbia (which had a sixty-one percent increase) and just ahead of Kentucky (which had
7 a fifty percent increase); and

8 WHEREAS, in its annual report issued in March of 2021, Louisiana's Advisory
9 Council on Heroin and Opioid Prevention and Education, a body created by Act No. 88 of
10 the 2017 Regular Session and known informally as the "HOPE Council", indicates that
11 among the most concerning opioid-related trends of the past year is the continuing rise in
12 fatal and non-fatal opioid poisonings, with notable spikes beginning in March of 2020 and
13 coinciding with the outbreak of COVID-19; and

14 WHEREAS, the 2021 HOPE Council annual report also notes that, as in prior years,
15 synthetic opioids and fentanyl continued to contribute to an increasing number of deaths in
16 Louisiana, with deaths related to fentanyl use increasing by roughly sixty-five percent from
17 2018 to 2019; and

18 WHEREAS, according to the Louisiana State Police Bureau of Investigation, the
19 amount of illicit fentanyl seized in this state increased from forty-nine grams in 2019 to over
20 three-and-one-half kilograms in 2020, a vast increase in percentage terms; and

21 WHEREAS, recognizing the vital necessity of public engagement in combating the
22 opioid epidemic, the Louisiana Department of Health, in September of 2019, hosted a three-
23 day-event in Slidell which the department branded as the Opioid Action Summit; and

24 WHEREAS, the 2019 Opioid Action Summit brought together hundreds of
25 healthcare providers, subject matter experts, and stakeholders in the addiction treatment
26 community, all of whom are at the forefront of fighting the opioid epidemic in our state, and
27 was a resounding success by every measure; and

28 WHEREAS, considering the immense challenges that Louisiana now faces on
29 multiple public health fronts, particularly with respect to opioids, it is critical that our state
30 remain steadfast and focused in combating opioid abuse; and

1 WHEREAS, policymakers, community leaders, and concerned citizens look to the
2 leadership of this state's health agency, the Louisiana Department of Health, to guide,
3 support, and inspire us in combating the opioid epidemic; and

4 WHEREAS, the members of the legislature understand the severity of the opioid
5 crisis in Louisiana and hereby express our intent, individually and as a body, to partner with
6 and support the efforts of the Louisiana Department of Health to address this daunting public
7 health crisis.

8 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby
9 urge and request the Louisiana Department of Health to convene an opioid action summit
10 in 2021.

11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the
12 secretary of the Louisiana Department of Health.

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 76 Engrossed

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Edmonds

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Summary of Amendments Adopted by House

The Committee Amendments Proposed by House Committee on Health and Welfare to the original bill:

1. Make a technical correction.