

2021 Regular Session

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 103

BY REPRESENTATIVE DUPLESSIS

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To urge and request that certain state agencies address the impacts of maternal depression and anxiety and implement maternal mental health screenings to facilitate evidence-based preventative care, early identification, and treatment services.

WHEREAS, maternal depression and anxiety negatively impact public health in the state of Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, maternal depression and anxiety encompass a range of symptoms and mental health disorders, including depression, anxiety, social withdrawal, and, in extreme cases, psychosis; and

WHEREAS, mental health issues are the most common complication of pregnancy and childbirth, and when left untreated, maternal mental health disorders can have serious medical, societal, and economic consequences; and

WHEREAS, at least one in eight new mothers experiences maternal depression and anxiety; and

WHEREAS, a mother's mental health is directly connected to her physical health and the health of her baby, born or unborn; and

WHEREAS, maternal depression and anxiety can affect a woman from the early stages of pregnancy until over one year after the birth of the child; and

WHEREAS, maternal depression and anxiety are common complications of childbirth, with incidence rates higher than pre-term births, low birth weight babies, and gestational diabetes; and

WHEREAS, when a mother experiences maternal depression and anxiety, it affects family well-being and stability; and

WHEREAS, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) occurs in some people after they have experienced a shocking, scary, or dangerous event and as many as eight out of one hundred women may experience it during pregnancy; and

WHEREAS, maternal depression and anxiety affect parent-child bonding and lower rates of breastfeeding; and

WHEREAS, children of affected mothers have an increased risk for serious health, developmental, or behavioral conditions, which can affect the child's overall well-being and growth; and

WHEREAS, many mothers feel reluctant to report symptoms or concerns, which has contributed to the lack of awareness among the public and healthcare providers; and

WHEREAS, there are evidence-based, cost effective screening, detection, and treatment options that are available for mothers and children, but these options are not adequately or consistently applied in the state of Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, some neonatal intensive care units have incorporated screening parents for PTSD into their protocols; and

WHEREAS, adequate funding to support services that track maternal mental health disorders is needed to support research and treatment initiatives.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby recognize maternal depression and anxiety as a statewide public health issue of concern which is in need of a resolution.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby see the need to address maternal mental health disorders at all levels, from individuals and families to community-wide organizations, systems, and policies within the state.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge the Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) and the medical community to develop and utilize evidence-based approaches that do all of the following:

- (1) Expand provider training, education, and support, and implement a standard of care across practices in perinatal and pediatric settings, including those working with mothers experiencing substance use disorders and those in emergency room settings.
- (2) Expand the obstetric healthcare workforce to include psychiatric specialists.
- (3) Screen mothers during each trimester of their pregnancies, at the first postpartum visit, and at a six-month postpartum obstetrics or primary care visit.

- (4) Screen parents by pediatric providers at the first, second, third, fourth, and sixth month well-child visits.
- (5) Refer to behavioral healthcare providers, including reproductive psychiatric specialists when necessary, all pregnant and postpartum women who screen above the average score on an evidence-based screening tool or who indicate any suicidal ideation.
- (6) Sufficiently reimburse providers for the role they play in the screening, diagnosis, and treatment process.
- (7) Increase public awareness and public education of maternal mental health disorders.
- (8) Expand statewide maternal mental health data collection, monitoring, and evaluation, and share information across state agencies, nonprofit organizations, and local authorities through centralized systems.
- (9) Increase support for prevention and peer support models, including home visiting programs, community health workers, and other peer or in-home support models.
- (10) Embed maternal mental health into all statewide crisis response policies.
- (11) Expand public and private models for prevention and care.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge all offices and agencies in the state of Louisiana whose responsibilities include working with new mothers, families, and children, including the Louisiana Department of Health and local health authorities, to address the short-term and long-term impacts of maternal depression and anxiety so that evidence-based preventive care, early identification, and treatment services are available and accessible statewide for all women, and adverse consequences in children and families can be prevented.

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

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE