

2022 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 909

BY REPRESENTATIVES EDMONDS AND GAROFALO

CHILDREN/DCFS: Establishes a continuum of care program for certain pregnant women and parents of young children

1 AN ACT

2 To enact Chapter 15 of Title 46 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950, to be comprised
3 of R.S. 46:1451 through 1455, relative to assistance programs of the Department of
4 Children and Family Services; to establish within the department an assistance
5 program for certain pregnant women and parents; to provide for services to be
6 delivered through the program; to require reporting to certain legislative committees
7 concerning the program; to require administrative rulemaking; and to provide for
8 related matters.

9 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

10 Section 1. Chapter 15 of Title 46 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950,
11 comprised of R.S. 46:1451 through 1455, is hereby enacted to read as follows:

12 CHAPTER 15. CONTINUUM OF CARE FOR
13 CERTAIN PREGNANT WOMEN AND PARENTS

14 §1451. Definitions

15 As used in this Chapter, the following terms have the meaning ascribed to
16 them in this Section:

17 (1) "Department" means the Department of Children and Family Services.

18 (2) "Program" means the continuum of care program established and
19 provided for in this Chapter.

1 (3) "TANF" means the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families block
2 grant program established pursuant to the Personal Responsibility and Work
3 Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, Public Law 104-193, and administered in
4 this state by the Department of Children and Family Services.

5 §1452. Continuum of care program; purpose and goals; means of finance

6 A. The legislature hereby creates within the department a continuum of care
7 program for certain pregnant women and parents, referred to hereafter in this Chapter
8 as the "program".

9 B.(1) The purpose of the program is to facilitate the operation of a statewide
10 telecare support network that provides community outreach, consultations, and care
11 coordination for women who are challenged with unexpected pregnancies.

12 (2) The program shall be designed to accomplish all of the following goals:

13 (a) Encourage healthy childbirth.

14 (b) Support childbirth as an alternative to abortion.

15 (c) Promote family formation.

16 (d) Assist parents in establishing successful parenting techniques.

17 (e) Increase the economic self-sufficiency of families.

18 C.(1) The program shall encompass a statewide telecare support network.

19 The department shall provide in rule for the functions and administration of this
20 network.

21 (2) The rules of the department providing for the telecare support network
22 shall ensure that the network does not hold itself out to be an entity that can perform,
23 refer for, or assist with an abortion. The telecare support network shall not set
24 appointments with or refer women or parents to any entity that performs abortions
25 or recommends for abortion.

26 D. The department shall finance the program with TANF funds and any
27 other monies appropriated to it by the legislature for operation of the program.

1 §1453. Services and supports; eligibility

2 A.(1) The program shall provide direct services, supports, social services
3 case management, and referrals to biological parents of unborn children and
4 biological or adoptive parents of children under the age of two years.

5 (2) The program shall deliver services exclusively through electronic means,
6 including synchronous and asynchronous interactions, utilizing the telecare support
7 network provided for in R.S. 46:1452 unless the legislature specifically appropriates
8 monies for other modes of service delivery.

9 B. The components of the program shall include, without limitation, all of
10 the following:

11 (1) Outreach to at-risk populations eligible for the program.

12 (2) Utilization of registered nurses, who shall be licensed in accordance with
13 R.S. 37:911 et seq., to perform the following functions:

14 (a) Assessment and evaluation of needs related to pregnancy or parenting.

15 (b) Provision of medically accurate, pregnancy-related medical information
16 to program participants.

17 (3) Utilization of social workers, who shall be licensed in accordance with
18 R.S. 37:2701 et seq., or other licensed individuals with equivalent experience to
19 perform the following functions:

20 (a) Development of a care plan, resources, and supports for program
21 participants to address identified needs.

22 (b) Referrals to appropriate local resources including, without limitation,
23 state and federal benefits programs and local charitable organizations.

24 (c) Assistance in applying for state and federal benefits programs.

25 (d) Assistance in accomplishing elements of the care plan.

26 (4) Coordination for pregnant women served by the telecare support network
27 of appointments with in-person pregnancy resources centers or similar agencies in
28 this state which provide information and services including, without limitation,

1 counseling, ultrasound services, pregnancy tests, prenatal assistance, parenting
2 classes, material support, and adoption information.

3 C. In order to be eligible to receive services through the program, an
4 individual shall, at the time of initial contact with the program, meet all of the
5 following requirements:

6 (1) Is a resident of this state.

7 (2) Is a biological parent of an unborn child or a biological or adoptive
8 parent of a child under the age of two years.

9 D. Any program participant who terminates a pregnancy shall be eligible to
10 continue receiving services through the program for a period of six months from the
11 date of the pregnancy termination.

12 §1454. Reporting

13 On or before December 1, 2022, and annually thereafter, the department shall
14 submit to the House and Senate committees on health and welfare a report on the
15 status and operation of the program. Each report required by this Section shall
16 include, at minimum, all of the following:

17 (1) A detailed itemization of expenditures associated with the program.

18 (2) The number of individuals served by the program, and for the individuals
19 served, the types of services provided to each.

20 (3) Any information regarding the program requested by and provided to any
21 elected member of the legislature during the period addressed in the report.

22 (4) Any other information that the secretary of the department deems
23 necessary or appropriate for facilitating evaluation of the program.

24 §1455. Rulemaking

25 The department shall promulgate in accordance with the Administrative
26 Procedure Act all such rules as are necessary to implement the provisions of this
27 Chapter.

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)]

HB 909 Reengrossed

2022 Regular Session

Edmonds

Abstract: Establishes within the Dept. of Children and Family Services a continuum of care program for biological parents of unborn children and biological or adoptive parents of child under the age of two.

Proposed law creates within the Dept. of Children and Family Services (DCFS) a continuum of care program for certain pregnant women and parents. Provides that the purpose of the program is to facilitate the operation of a statewide telecare support network that provides community outreach, consultations, and care coordination for women who are challenged with unexpected pregnancies.

Proposed law provides that the continuum of care program shall be designed to accomplish all of the following goals:

- (1) Encourage healthy childbirth.
- (2) Support childbirth as an alternative to abortion.
- (3) Promote family formation.
- (4) Assist parents in establishing successful parenting techniques.
- (5) Increase the economic self-sufficiency of families.

Proposed law requires that DCFS provide in rule for the functions and administration of the telecare support network. Stipulate that these rules ensure that the network does not hold itself out to be an entity that can perform, refer for, or assist with an abortion.

Proposed law prohibits the telecare support network created therein from setting appointments with or referring women or parents to any entity that performs abortions or recommends for abortion.

Proposed law requires that DCFS finance the continuum of care program with TANF funds and any other monies appropriated to it by the legislature for operation of the program.

Proposed law requires that the program created therein deliver services exclusively through electronic means utilizing the telecare support network provided for in proposed law unless the legislature specifically appropriates monies for other modes of service delivery.

Proposed law provides that the continuum of care program shall provide direct services, supports, social services case management, and referrals to biological parents of unborn children and biological or adoptive parents of children under the age of two years. Provides that the components of the program shall include, without limitation, all of the following:

- (1) Outreach to at-risk populations eligible for the program.
- (2) Utilization of registered nurses to assess and evaluate needs related to pregnancy or parenting and to provide medically accurate, pregnancy-related medical information to program participants.

- (3) Utilization of social workers or other licensed individuals with equivalent experience to perform the following functions:
- (a) Development of a care plan, resources, and supports for program participants to address identified needs.
 - (b) Referrals to appropriate local resources including, without limitation, state and federal benefits programs and local charitable organizations.
 - (c) Assistance in applying for state and federal benefits programs.
 - (d) Assistance in accomplishing elements of the care plan.
- (4) Coordination for pregnant women served by the telecare support network of appointments with in-person pregnancy resources centers or similar agencies in La. which provide information and services including, without limitation, counseling, ultrasound services, pregnancy tests, prenatal assistance, parenting classes, material support, and adoption information.

Proposed law stipulates that in order to be eligible to receive services through the continuum of care program, an individual shall, at the time of initial contact with the program, meet all of the following requirements:

- (1) Is a resident of this state.
- (2) Is a biological parent of an unborn child or a biological or adoptive parent of a child under the age of two years.

Proposed law provides that any program participant who terminates a pregnancy shall be eligible to continue receiving services through the continuum of care program for a period of six months from the date of the pregnancy termination.

Proposed law requires that on or before Dec. 1, 2022, and annually thereafter, DCFS shall submit to the legislative committees on health and welfare a report on the status and operation of the continuum of care program and provides requirements for the content of such reports.

(Adds R.S. 46:1451-1455)

Summary of Amendments Adopted by House

The House Floor Amendments to the engrossed bill:

- 1. Delete proposed law requiring that the program created therein shall encompass the existing alternatives to abortion TANF initiative provided for in present administrative rule.
- 2. Require that the DCFS administrative rules relative to the telecare support network provided for in proposed law ensure that the network does not hold itself out to be an entity that can perform, refer for, or assist with an abortion.
- 3. Stipulate that the telecare support network shall not set appointments with or refer women or parents to any entity that performs abortions or recommends for abortion.
- 4. Require that the program created by proposed law deliver services exclusively through electronic means utilizing the telecare support network provided for in

proposed law unless the legislature specifically appropriates monies for other modes of service delivery.

5. Add the following to the set of components of the program created by proposed law: Coordination for pregnant women served by the telecare support network of appointments with in-person pregnancy resources centers or similar agencies which provide information and services including, without limitation, counseling, ultrasound services, pregnancy tests, prenatal assistance, parenting classes, material support, and adoption information.