

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 110

BY SENATOR BOUDREAUX

A RESOLUTION

To urge and request the Louisiana Department of Health to implement a digital platform to facilitate access to behavioral health services for adults with serious mental illness and children with serious emotional disturbance.

WHEREAS, serious mental illness (SMI) commonly refers to a diagnosis of psychotic disorders, bipolar disorder, and either major depression with psychotic symptoms or treatment-resistant depression; and

WHEREAS, SMI can also include anxiety disorders, eating disorders, and personality disorders, if the degree of functional impairment is severe; and

WHEREAS, SMIs are long-term illnesses involving substantial functional impairment that often lead to an inability to maintain gainful employment, poor social support, repeated psychiatric hospitalizations, homelessness, incarceration, and coexisting substance use disorders; and

WHEREAS, in 2019, over fifteen out of one hundred thousand Louisiana residents died by suicide; and

WHEREAS, in 2020, over forty-one out of one hundred thousand Louisiana residents died from drug overdoses; and

WHEREAS, in 2021, almost eighteen percent of adults in Louisiana reported their mental health was not good fourteen or more days in the past thirty days; and

WHEREAS, in 2021, almost twenty-percent of adults, ages eighteen through forty-four, in Louisiana reported frequent mental-health distress; and

WHEREAS, since the COVID pandemic began, over thirty-two percent of adults in Louisiana reported having symptoms of serious depression or anxiety; and

WHEREAS, children with severe emotional disturbance (SED) are persons, under the age of 18, who have had a diagnosable mental, behavioral, or emotional disorder of sufficient duration to meet diagnostic criteria specified within the most current Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM), that resulted in functional impairment which substantially interferes with or limits the child's role or functioning in family, school, or community activities; and

WHEREAS, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has identified a digital platform to facilitate access to behavioral health services for adults with serious mental illness and children with serious emotional disturbance as an approved expenditure through SAMHSA block grants to support efforts to connect individuals with services in their area; and

WHEREAS, a digital platform could provide access to services in a wide variety of settings, including mental-health services, suicide prevention, and veterans' affairs that would greatly benefit the residents of Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, a Louisiana-specific digital platform which makes it easier for individuals to find local behavioral health services would be a valuable resource to Louisiana residents; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana continues to face unprecedented challenges with substance abuse, violent crime, and suicide, making the need to connect residents with resources even more vital than ever.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the Louisiana Department of Health to implement a digital platform to facilitate access to behavioral health services for adults with serious mental illness and children with serious emotional disturbance.

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

---

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE