

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 23

BY SENATOR BARROW

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To urge and request the Louisiana Department of Health to perform a comprehensive study on access to behavioral health services across the state.

WHEREAS, Louisiana is experiencing a mental health crisis, with over three million people in the state of Louisiana living in communities that lack a sufficient number of mental and behavioral health providers; and

WHEREAS, the opioid epidemic and the mental health crisis have contributed to an increase in overdoses, suicides, and depression in the past two decades; and

WHEREAS, although behavioral health needs have increased, the number of individuals receiving behavioral health services has not; and

WHEREAS, a 2023 report issued by the National Center for Health Workforce Analysis projects the shortage of addiction counselors, marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, psychologists, and psychiatrists will continue to intensify for the foreseeable future; and

WHEREAS, costs to patients, low reimbursement rates and administrative burdens for behavioral health providers participating in insurance plans, and lack of coverage for certain behavioral health provider types contribute to the behavioral health workforce shortage; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana needs to identify ways to increase its behavioral health workforce and address provider and patient-level barriers.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the Louisiana Department of Health to perform a comprehensive study on access to behavioral health services across the state and to report the findings and recommendations from the study to the legislature no later than February 1, 2025.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the department shall work in conjunction with the Board of Regents, Louisiana State Board of Medical Examiners, Louisiana State Board of Examiners of Psychologists, Louisiana Licensed Professional Counselors Board of Examiners, Louisiana State Board of Nursing, and Addictive Disorders Regulatory Authority Board to complete the study.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study shall provide information and recommendations on the following:

(1) Current behavioral health services covered by the Medicaid managed care organizations and private insurance companies.

(2) The status of education programs for future behavioral health providers currently offered in Louisiana.

(3) The capacity for higher education institutions to increase educational opportunities for providers.

(4) Strategies for increasing access to behavioral health services in rural areas of the state.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Louisiana Department of Health shall submit a written report of its findings and recommendations to the legislature no later than February 1, 2025.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the secretary of the Louisiana Department of Health, the commissioner of higher education, the executive director of the Louisiana State Board of Medical Examiners, the executive director of the Louisiana State Board of Examiners of Psychologists, the executive director of the Louisiana Licensed Professional Counselors Board of Examiners, the executive director of the Louisiana State Board of Nursing, and the executive director of the Addictive Disorders Regulatory Authority Board.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES