

2017 Regular Session

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 75

BY REPRESENTATIVE WHITE

HEALTH/MEDICAL TREATMENT: Requests the Louisiana Department of Health take all necessary steps to bring attention to the need to eliminate pain as the fifth vital sign and a determinate of quality patient care

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

2 To urge and request the Louisiana Department of Health to take all necessary steps to bring
3 attention to the need to eliminate the use of pain as the fifth vital sign and as a
4 determinate of quality patient care.

5 WHEREAS, vital signs are useful in detecting or monitoring medical problems; and

6 WHEREAS, the four main vital signs routinely monitored by medical professionals
7 and healthcare providers are body temperature, pulse, respiration rate, and blood pressure;
8 and

9 WHEREAS, the idea of evaluating pain as a fifth vital sign has rapidly caught on
10 nationally and has been adopted by the Veterans Health Administration and the Joint
11 Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations, now commonly known as the
12 Joint Commission; and

13 WHEREAS, in 1999, in an effort to improve pain management, the Veterans Health
14 Administration launched the "Pain as the 5th Vital Sign" initiative, requiring a patient-
15 reported pain intensity rating from zero to ten at all clinical encounters; and

16 WHEREAS, the Joint Commission subsequently recommended that pain be assessed
17 in all patients; and

18 WHEREAS, in 1997, the Federation of State Medical Boards developed model
19 guidelines to encourage state medical boards and other healthcare regulatory agencies to

1 adopt policies encouraging the safe and effective treatment of patients with pain including
2 the use of opioid analgesics; and

3 WHEREAS, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, opioid
4 prescriptions have nearly quadrupled since 1999; and

5 WHEREAS, deaths from prescription opioids, including drugs like oxycodone,
6 hydrocodone, and methadone, have more than quadrupled since 1999; and

7 WHEREAS, from 1999 to 2015, more than one hundred eighty-three thousand
8 Americans have died from overdoses related to prescription opioids; and

9 WHEREAS, overdose is not the only risk related to prescription opioids; and

10 WHEREAS, in 2014, almost two million Americans abused or were dependent on
11 prescription opioids; and

12 WHEREAS, the United States Food and Drug Administration is now recommending
13 mandatory training for physicians who prescribe opioids; and

14 WHEREAS, physicians who resist prescribing more narcotics may be adversely
15 affected if patient satisfaction scores in patient care surveys drop as a result; and

16 WHEREAS, in June 2016, the American Medical Association House of Delegates
17 adopted a Board of Trustees report recommending that the association advocate that pain as
18 the fifth vital sign be removed from professional standards and usage; and

19 WHEREAS, physicians at the American Academy of Family Physicians 2016
20 Congress of Delegates voted to eliminate pain scores as the fifth vital sign.

21 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby
22 urge and request the Louisiana Department of Health to take all necessary steps to bring
23 attention to the need to eliminate the use of pain as the fifth vital sign and a determinate of
24 quality patient care, and to increase prescriber education and awareness on assessing,
25 identifying, and treating the symptom of pain with the goal of reducing the use of opioids
26 to treat patient-reported pain when alternative forms of pain management would be
27 sufficient.

28 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Louisiana Department of Health is hereby
29 urged to bring this important issue to the attention of the United States Congress, the Centers
30 for Disease Control and Prevention, the United States Food and Drug Administration,

1 America's Health Insurance Plans, accrediting organizations including but not limited to the
2 National Committee on Quality Assurance, the Joint Commission, and the Utilization
3 Review Accreditation Commission, and the Federation of State Medical Boards, as well as
4 Louisiana medical schools, prescriber licensing boards, prescriber trade associations, and
5 other interested stakeholders and policy makers.

6 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the
7 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)]

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Urges and requests the La. Dept. of Health to take all necessary steps to bring attention to the need to eliminate the use of pain as the fifth vital sign and a determinate of quality patient care.