

2017 Regular Session

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 75

BY REPRESENTATIVE WHITE

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To urge and request the Louisiana Department 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 as a determinant of quality patient care.

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

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS, in 1997, the Federation of State Medical Boards developed model guidelines to encourage state medical boards and other healthcare regulatory agencies to adopt policies encouraging the safe and effective treatment of patients with pain including the use of opioid analgesics; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the Louisiana Department 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 determinant of quality patient care, and to increase prescriber education and awareness on assessing, identifying, and treating the symptom of pain with the goal of reducing the use of opioids to treat patient-reported pain when alternative forms of pain management would be sufficient.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Louisiana Department of Health is hereby urged to bring this important issue to the attention of the United States Congress, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the United States Food and Drug Administration, America's Health Insurance Plans, accrediting organizations including but not limited to the National Committee on Quality Assurance, the Joint Commission, and the Utilization Review Accreditation Commission, and the Federation of State Medical Boards, as well as Louisiana medical schools, prescriber licensing boards, prescriber trade associations, and other interested stakeholders and policy makers.

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