

Regular Session, 2014

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 173

BY REPRESENTATIVE BARROW

A RESOLUTION

To urge and request the Department of Health and Hospitals and the division of administration to report to the House Committee on Health and Welfare concerning reasons for the Mental Health Emergency Room Extension, previously in operation from 2010 through 2013, at Earl K. Long Medical Center ceasing to operate upon privatization of that hospital, and concerning how services formerly delivered there will be resumed in the community of Baton Rouge.

WHEREAS, from January 2010 through April 2013, the publicly operated Earl K. Long Medical Center, with assistance from the Capital Area Human Services District, maintained a Mental Health Emergency Room Extension (MHERE); and

WHEREAS, the MHERE served as a ten to fifteen-bed crisis receiving center where specialized staff provided a high level of screening and assessment to people in behavioral health crises, in order to properly connect those patients to either acute or ongoing community-based treatment to diminish the recurrent need for crisis services; and

WHEREAS, the MHERE served as a crisis continuum component that assisted law enforcement, hospital emergency departments, and jails, as well as public and private sector budgets, in dealing with the increasing rate of deinstitutionalization of persons needing mental health treatment and the effects of the increasing rate of substance abuse in the community, in addition to helping those returning to our communities from active military duty; and

WHEREAS, within two years of operating ten to fifteen beds at a time at an annual operational cost of one million six hundred thousand dollars, the MHERE served more than three thousand four hundred patients and saved the state over twenty million six hundred thousand dollars by avoiding hospitalizations for more than sixty-five percent of the patients admitted to the MHERE; and

WHEREAS, in April 2013, concurrent with the privatization of the Earl K. Long Medical Center, the MHERE closed and no longer operates in Baton Rouge; and

WHEREAS, other local hospital emergency rooms and parish prison facilities are now seeing a significant increase in admittance of people in behavioral health and substance abuse disorder crises; and

WHEREAS, the original cooperative endeavor agreement entered into by the state of Louisiana, through the division of administration and the Department of Health and Hospitals, on February 5, 2010, during the privatization of the Earl K. Long Medical Center, provided that the state would work cooperatively with the Capital Area Human Services District and the office of mental health of the Department of Health and Hospitals to address the ongoing provision of mental health services in the service area.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the Department of Health and Hospitals and the division of administration to report to the House Committee on Health and Welfare concerning reasons for the Mental Health Emergency Room Extension, previously in operation from 2010 through 2013, at Earl K. Long Medical Center ceasing to operate upon privatization of that hospital, and concerning how services formerly delivered there will be resumed in the community of Baton Rouge.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the secretary of the Department of Health and Hospitals and the commissioner of the division of administration.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES