

2016 Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 173

BY REPRESENTATIVE LEGER

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A RESOLUTION

To urge and request the Department of Health and Hospitals not to establish freestanding emergency departments as a type of licensed healthcare facility in this state except, potentially, in limited circumstances specified herein.

WHEREAS, a freestanding emergency department is a type of healthcare facility that is structurally separate and distinct from a hospital and provides emergency care; and

WHEREAS, as a matter of health and fiscal policy, whether a state should license freestanding emergency departments is a highly controversial issue; and

WHEREAS, studies on this issue in states that have considered licensure of freestanding emergency departments consistently find that allowing these facilities to operate would impede the states' efforts to contain healthcare costs; and

WHEREAS, in states that allow freestanding emergency departments to operate, the facilities tend to be highly profitable for their owners, generating a large volume of business even when located in close proximity to existing hospital emergency rooms; and

WHEREAS, hospital emergency rooms are the costliest healthcare setting in our state's health system; and

WHEREAS, because freestanding emergency departments charge higher prices than hospital emergency rooms, allowing freestanding emergency departments to operate in Louisiana would exacerbate the problem of healthcare cost inflation in this state; and

WHEREAS, the establishment of freestanding emergency departments would also impede the efforts of this state to better coordinate care for our medically needy population, as these facilities have the potential to induce people to use them for nonemergency conditions in lieu of seeing a primary care physician; and

1 WHEREAS, notwithstanding the foregoing provisions, the House of Representatives
2 of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby recognize that many rural and urban
3 communities of this state have a critical shortage of healthcare professionals and facilities;
4 therefore, the sense of this legislative body is that establishment of a freestanding emergency
5 department should be considered only for the most medically underserved areas of the state
6 where no other options for delivering health care exist, as demonstrated pursuant to a
7 thorough facility need review process; and

8 WHEREAS, if this state is to enhance access to care and improve the overall health
9 of our population, strategies for achieving these goals should include provision of greater
10 levels of primary care and development of a robust network of hospital-affiliated clinics in
11 underserved areas rather than establish a new type of licensed healthcare facility that
12 provides costly and potentially unnecessary services.

13 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the
14 Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the Department of Health and
15 Hospitals not to establish freestanding emergency departments as a type of licensed
16 healthcare facility in this state unless an overwhelming need for such a facility exists in a
17 medically needy community, as demonstrated and documented by a thorough facility need
18 review process.

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

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES