

Regular Session, 2013

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 218

BY REPRESENTATIVE BARROW

A RESOLUTION

To urge and request the Department of Health and Hospitals to study the feasibility and impact of requiring Medicaid providers to offer hepatitis C testing to individuals born between 1945 and 1965 and HIV testing to all individuals in accordance with the Centers for Disease Control's most recent HIV testing guidelines and to report its findings to the House Committee on Health and Welfare.

WHEREAS, hepatitis C disease is a disease of the liver caused by the hepatitis C virus; and

WHEREAS, hepatitis C virus infection is the most common chronic bloodborne infection in the United States and Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, according to the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), it is estimated that eighty thousand residents of Louisiana are infected with the hepatitis C virus; and

WHEREAS, an estimated five hundred people are infected with hepatitis C each year in Louisiana and one hundred twenty Louisiana residents are expected to die each year from hepatitis C; and

WHEREAS, many individuals can live with hepatitis C for decades without feeling sick, and therefore are not diagnosed and not reported; and

WHEREAS, the highest rates for both males and females are seen in the forty-five to fifty-four year old age group; and

WHEREAS, individuals born during the period 1945 to 1965 are five times more likely than other adults to be infected with hepatitis C and seventy-five percent of adults with hepatitis C were born in these years; and

WHEREAS, individuals infected with hepatitis C who are unaware that they are infected are unlikely to take precautions to prevent the spread or exacerbation of their infection; and

WHEREAS, early diagnosis and treatment of hepatitis C can help prevent liver damage, cirrhosis, and liver cancer; and

WHEREAS, the CDC has determined that one-time hepatitis C testing of everyone born during the period 1945 to 1965 will prevent more than one hundred twenty thousand deaths in the United States; and

WHEREAS, more than one million people are living with HIV in the United States, but one in five does not know they are infected; and

WHEREAS, a total of eighteen thousand three hundred eight persons are living with HIV/AIDS in Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, in 2011, one thousand two hundred eighty-two individuals were newly diagnosed with HIV infection in Louisiana, a thirteen and one-half percent increase from the number of new diagnoses in 2010; and

WHEREAS, the cumulative number of deaths among persons diagnosed with HIV/AIDS, reported to the Department of Health and Hospitals, office of public health, through December 31, 2010, is twelve thousand seven hundred fifty-five; and

WHEREAS, the 2011 CDC HIV Surveillance Report first provided a national comparison of estimated HIV case rates by state and Louisiana ranked third in the nation for estimated HIV case rates and eleventh in the estimated number of HIV cases; and

WHEREAS, early diagnosis allows an individual with HIV to receive treatment and care early enough to delay the onset of AIDS and also gives the state an opportunity to provide outreach and education to help those with HIV better understand how to prevent spreading the virus to others; and

WHEREAS, infectious diseases such as hepatitis C and HIV may be easily prevented from spreading through timely testing and education; and

WHEREAS, increased access to hepatitis C and HIV testing and possible early diagnosis would be beneficial to the health and welfare of the citizens of Louisiana.

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 to study the feasibility and impact of requiring Medicaid providers to offer hepatitis C testing to individuals born between 1945 and 1965 and HIV testing to all

individuals in accordance with the Centers for Disease Control's most recent HIV testing guidelines.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the department shall provide the findings of this study in the form of a written report to the House Committee on Health and Welfare prior to the 2014 Regular Session of the Legislature of Louisiana.

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

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES