

2020 Regular Session

SENATE BILL NO. 295

BY SENATOR BARROW

GROUP BENEFITS PROGRAM. Requires program to cover treatment of severe obesity.
(8/1/20)

1 AN ACT

2 To enact R.S. 42:860, relative to the state Office of Group Benefits; to require coverage for
3 treatment for severe obesity; to provide for certain requirements; and to provide for
4 related matters.

5 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

6 Section 1. R.S. 42:860 is hereby enacted to read as follows:

7 **§860. Severe obesity; legislative findings; coverage required**

8 **A. The legislature hereby finds and declares that obesity is a significant**
9 **health problem affecting hundreds of thousands of Louisiana residents. Severe**
10 **obesity increases the mortality rate more than threefold, causes physical and**
11 **emotional disability, and is often associated with comorbid health conditions,**
12 **including hypertension, cardiopulmonary conditions, and diabetes, all of which**
13 **compound the impact of obesity on longevity and quality of life. Louisiana**
14 **residents with obesity are ninety percent more likely to have diabetes and fifty**
15 **percent more likely to have high blood pressure than those who are not obese.**
16 **Therapeutic interventions can alter the course and severity of obesity and severe**
17 **obesity has been successfully treated through established surgical treatments.**

1 **B. As used in this Section, the term**

2 **(1) "Severe obesity" means either of the following:**

3 **(a) A body mass index equal to or greater than forty kilograms per meter**
4 **squared.**

5 **(b) A body mass index equal to or greater than thirty-five kilograms per**
6 **meter squared along with an associated comorbidity including but not limited**
7 **to hypertension, cardiopulmonary condition, sleep apnea, or diabetes.**

8 **(2) "Body mass index" means a practical marker used to assess the**
9 **degree of obesity, calculated by dividing the weight in kilograms by the height**
10 **in meters squared.**

11 **C. The Office of Group Benefits programs shall offer a provision stating**
12 **that benefits shall be payable for the treatment of severe obesity through gastric**
13 **bypass surgery or other methods recognized by the National Institutes of Health**
14 **as effective for the long-term reversal of severe obesity.**

The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part
of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Cheryl B. Cooper.

DIGEST

SB 295 Original

2020 Regular Session

Barrow

Proposed law defines "severe obesity" as a body mass index (BMI) of at least 40 or a BMI of at least 35 along with comorbidity or existing medical conditions such as hypertension, cardiopulmonary condition, sleep apnea, fatty liver disease, or diabetes.

Proposed law requires the Office of Group Benefits to offer a provision stating that benefits shall be payable for the treatment of severe obesity through bariatric surgery or other methods recognized by the National Institutes of Health as effective for the long-term reversal of severe obesity.

Effective August 1, 2020.

(Adds R.S. 42:860)