

SENATE CONCURRENT STUDY REQUEST NO. 2

BY SENATOR GATTI

A CONCURRENT STUDY REQUEST

To request the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare and the House Committee on Health and Welfare meet and function as a joint committee to study and hear testimony on the Senate Resolution No. 29 of the 2014 Regular Session of the Legislature work group report on strategies to decrease primary care utilization in emergency rooms and hospitals across Louisiana.

WHEREAS, in the 2014 regular session of the legislature, Senate Bill No. 493 was filed to prohibit advertising of emergency room wait times by a hospital, as defined in R.S. 40:2102; and

WHEREAS, in an attempt to reach a compromise on this matter, the author filed Senate Resolution No. 29, directing the Department of Health and Hospitals to create a work group to develop strategies to decrease primary care utilization in emergency rooms; and

WHEREAS, the department established an "ER is for Emergencies" work group, consisting of representatives of the Louisiana Hospital Association, Bayou Health plans, Louisiana Behavioral Health Partnership Statewide Management Organization, Louisiana Health Care Quality Forum, Louisiana Nursing Home Alliance, Louisiana Chapter of the American College of Emergency Physicians, Louisiana State Medical Society, Louisiana Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, Louisiana Ambulance Alliance and Louisiana Association of Health Plans; and

WHEREAS, the work group met weekly from April 23, 2014, through the fall of 2014; and

WHEREAS, in February 2015, on behalf of the work group, the department submitted a report to the legislature that included five strategies that the membership agreed upon to decrease primary care utilization in hospital emergency departments; and

WHEREAS, the five strategies were:

(1) Establish an electronic ED Visit Registry to provide timely notification of Medicaid members' ED use to Bayou Health plans.

(2) Develop and implement a communications plan to educate patients on the appropriate use of hospital EDs and alternate access points to care.

(3) Develop and issue prescribing recommendations to discourage narcotic seeking in hospital EDs.

(4) Promote use of the Louisiana Board of Pharmacy's Prescription Monitoring Program to identify potential narcotic seekers in the ED.

(5) Develop baseline and progress measures for quarterly reporting on the implementation of agreed upon strategies. These measures are hospital participation in the ED Visit Registry, the completeness of data reported to the ED Visit Registry, accuracy of Medicaid member identification from the ED Visit Registry, pre-ED visit primary care contact rate, post-ED visit follow up rate, and the number of ED visits per 1,000 member months; and

WHEREAS, in its closing paragraph, the department reported being "optimistic about the potential for the strategies developed by the SR 29 Working Group to reduce ED demands and constrain Medicaid expenditure growth"; and

WHEREAS, it has been more than two years since the work group first convened and it is unclear whether these strategies have been implemented or, if implemented, what the outcomes have been; and

WHEREAS, primary care use of the emergency department continues to be a significant problem, with some hospitals now even offering website links or apps to "check-in" or book your emergency room visits in advance; and

WHEREAS, this emergency room misuse translates into inappropriate and more costly care at a time when the state budget is already strapped; and

WHEREAS, Senate Bill No. 38 of the 2016 Regular Session of the Legislature was filed to address the reimbursement rate for emergency room treatment for non-emergency services; and

WHEREAS, it is appropriate to conduct a hearing so that the parties who developed

and agreed upon the Senate Resolution No. 29 strategies could present an update to the committees on the status of implementation of each strategy, explain any impediments to implementation, and offer any constructive alternatives to address this critical issue.

THEREFORE, the Legislature of Louisiana requests that the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare and the House Committee on Health and Welfare meet and function as a joint committee to hear testimony on the Senate Resolution No. 29 work group report on strategies to decrease primary care utilization in emergency rooms and hospitals across Louisiana; and that the joint committee report its findings to the legislature prior to July 1, 2016.

A copy of this Study Request shall be transmitted to the Department of Health and Hospitals, Louisiana Hospital Association, Bayou Health plans, Louisiana Behavioral Health Partnership Statewide Management Organization, Louisiana Health Care Quality Forum, Louisiana Nursing Home Alliance, Louisiana Chapter of the American College of Emergency Physicians, Louisiana State Medical Society, Louisiana Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, Louisiana Ambulance Alliance and Louisiana Association of Health Plans.