

2022 Regular Session

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 44

BY REPRESENTATIVE DUSTIN MILLER

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To create the Health Disparities in Rural Areas Task Force as a subcommittee of the Statewide Health Equity Consortium within the Louisiana Department of Health, to provide for the composition and duties of the task force, and to require the task force to report findings and recommendations to the legislative committees on health and welfare.

WHEREAS, according to the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, overall health outcomes for African Americans, Hispanic Americans, and American Indians in this country are far poorer than for white people; and

WHEREAS, vast health disparities persist in this country, particularly in rural areas, and many have worsened during the COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, rural areas comprise roughly eighty percent of Louisiana's total geographic area; and

WHEREAS, nearly twenty-six percent of our state's population, totaling more than one million two hundred thousand Louisianans, live in rural communities; and

WHEREAS, sixty-three of Louisiana's sixty-four parishes are classified as health professional shortage areas according to the standards of the federal Health Resources and Services Administration; and

WHEREAS, approximately ninety-eight percent of this state's entire population lives in a federally designated health professional shortage area; and

WHEREAS, the vast majority of Louisiana's rural communities are medically underserved by all established measures, yet programs to address the healthcare needs of this population remain underfunded and few are guided by local stakeholders or locally conducted needs assessments; and

WHEREAS, in consideration of the findings set forth in this Resolution, the legislature hereby declares that improving health outcomes in rural communities is a critical public health priority of this state.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby create the Health Disparities in Rural Areas Task Force.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall be composed of the following members:

(1) The president of the board of directors of the Louisiana State Nurses Association or his designee.

(2) One member who possesses postgraduate degrees in both nursing and business administration appointed by the director of clinical practice, health policy, and advocacy of the Louisiana State Nurses Association.

(3) The executive director of the Louisiana State Board of Nursing or his designee.

(4) The executive director of the Louisiana State Board of Medical Examiners or his designee.

(5) The dean of the Southern University School of Nursing or his designee.

(6) The president of the board of directors of the Louisiana Association of Nurse Practitioners or his designee.

(7) The chief executive officer of the Louisiana State Medical Society or his designee.

(8) The chief operating officer of the Rural Hospital Coalition, Inc. or his designee.

(9) The president of the Louisiana Hospital Association or his designee.

(10) The executive director of the Louisiana Rural Health Association or his designee.

(11) The executive director of the Louisiana Primary Care Association or his designee.

(12) The secretary of the Louisiana Department of Health or his designee.

(13) The president of the board of directors of the Louisiana Managed Medicaid Association or his designee.

(14) The state director of AARP Louisiana or his designee.

(15) A certified nurse midwife appointed by the executive director of the Louisiana State Board of Nursing.

(16) The president of the board of directors of the Louisiana Academy of Family Physicians or his designee.

(17) One primary care physician from each of the six Louisiana congressional districts appointed by the president of the board of directors of the Louisiana Academy of Family Physicians.

(18) The president of the Louisiana Council of Administrators in Nursing Education or his designee.

(19) The president of the Black Nurses Association of Acadiana or his designee.

(20) The president of the Louisiana Independent Pharmacies Association.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the duties of the task force shall include, without limitation, all of the following:

(1) Identifying the key drivers of health disparities in rural areas.

(2) Considering social determinants of health in developing recommendations for delivering high-quality health care in rural areas.

(3) Studying practicable solutions for reducing healthcare provider shortages in rural communities of Louisiana.

(4) Collaborating with health professional licensing boards of this state to draft proposals for legislation that will foster greater access to care for rural residents.

(5) Developing proposals for healthcare workforce training initiatives which promote diversity in health professions.

(6) Studying the impact of access to broadband internet and other technologies that facilitate wider deployment of telehealth and telemedicine services and thereby improve access to care in rural areas.

(7) Serving as a resource for parish governments to build partnerships for community outreach to address social determinants of health in rural communities.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall be a subcommittee of the Statewide Health Equity Consortium within the Louisiana Department of Health.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Statewide Health Equity Consortium shall convene the first meeting of the task force no later than August 15, 2022.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, at its first meeting, the task force shall select from among its members a chairperson and any other officers it deems necessary for the functioning of the group.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force may adopt rules of procedure and any other policies as may be necessary to facilitate the work of the group.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that on or before March 1, 2023, the task force shall submit to the House Committee on Health and Welfare, the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare, and the David R. Poynter Legislative Research Library a report of its findings and recommendations.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that legislative authority for the task force shall terminate on July 1, 2023.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the president of the board of directors and the director of clinical practice, health policy, and advocacy of the Louisiana State Nurses Association, the executive director of the Louisiana State Board of Nursing, the executive director of the Louisiana State Board of Medical Examiners, the dean of the Southern University School of Nursing, the president of the board of directors of the Louisiana Association of Nurse Practitioners, the chief executive officer of the Louisiana State Medical Society, the chief operating officer of the Rural Hospital Coalition, Inc., the president of the Louisiana Hospital Association, the executive director of the Louisiana Rural Health Association, the executive director of the Louisiana Primary Care Association, the secretary of the Louisiana Department of Health, the president of the board of directors of the Louisiana Managed Medicaid Association, the state director of AARP Louisiana, the president of the board of directors of the Louisiana Academy of Family Physicians, the president of the Louisiana Council of Administrators in Nursing Education, the president of the Black Nurses Association of Acadiana, and the president of the Louisiana Independent Pharmacies Association.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE