

Regular Session, 2014

HOUSE BILL NO. 1049

BY REPRESENTATIVE ARMES

INSURANCE/GROUP-STATE: Requires state employee group benefits to cover bariatric surgery techniques for the treatment of morbid obesity

1 AN ACT

2 To enact R.S. 42:860, relative to the state group benefits program; to require that coverage  
3 for treatment for morbid obesity be offered; to provide for certain requirements; and  
4 to provide for 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. Morbid obesity; legislative findings

8 A. The legislature hereby finds and declares that obesity is a significant  
9 health problem affecting hundreds of thousands of Louisiana residents. Morbid  
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. Obese Louisiana  
14 residents are ninety percent more likely to have diabetes and fifty percent more likely  
15 to have high blood pressure than those who are not obese. Therapeutic interventions  
16 can alter the course and severity of obesity and morbid obesity has successfully been  
17 treated through established surgical treatments.

18 B.(1) As used in this Section, the term "morbid obesity" shall mean either  
19 of the following:

1           (a) A body mass index equal to or greater than forty kilograms per meter  
2           squared; or

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

6           (2) As used in this Section, the term "body mass index" shall mean a  
7           practical marker used to assess the degree of obesity and is calculated by dividing  
8           the weight in kilograms by the height in meters squared.

9           C. The Office of Group Benefits programs shall offer a provision for the  
10          treatment of morbid obesity, as defined in Paragraph (B)(1) of this Section, through  
11          gastric bypass surgery or other methods as may be recognized by the National  
12          Institutes of Health as effective for the long-term reversal of morbid obesity.

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#### DIGEST

The digest printed below was prepared by House Legislative Services. It constitutes no part of the legislative instrument.

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Armes

HB No.

**Abstract:** Mandates the Office of Group Benefits offer coverage for treatment of morbid obesity through gastric bypass surgery or other methods recognized by the National Institutes of Health.

Proposed law defines "morbid 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 conditions, sleep apnea, or diabetes.

Proposed law requires the Office of Group Benefits to offer a provision stating that benefits shall be payable for the treatment of morbid obesity through gastric bypass surgery or other methods recognized by the National Institutes of Health.

(Adds R.S. 42:860)