

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 25

BY SENATOR PEACOCK

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To urge and request the Louisiana Department of Health to study the use of scrambler therapy as an opioid alternative for the treatment of pain.

WHEREAS, opioid related deaths in Louisiana were one hundred fifty times higher in 2017 than they were in 2012; and

WHEREAS, deaths in Louisiana involving fentanyl have increased by more than five hundred percent since 2014; and

WHEREAS, a significant contributor to opioid related deaths is prescription opioids for the treatment of pain, with Louisiana prescribers writing nearly five million opioid prescriptions per year; and

WHEREAS, many patients with chronic pain are keenly aware of the risks associated with opioids and eager to try alternative treatments for relief; and

WHEREAS, although Louisiana has enacted several laws to limit and curtail opioid prescriptions, health carriers and insurance plans often prefer and will only cover opioid treatment for pain; and

WHEREAS, scrambler therapy has been a widely used alternative for pain treatment in Europe and is being introduced in several markets in the United States; and

WHEREAS, scrambler therapy is a nonnarcotic, noninvasive, pain-free use of electrodes to target specific pain sites; and

WHEREAS, scrambler therapy is still considered experimental in the United States pending investigations and clinical trials; and

WHEREAS, a 2018 survey of government and commercial health plans found that insurance does not cover scrambler therapy for patients in Louisiana, resulting in access being limited to those who can afford to pay cash for the service; and

WHEREAS, the Louisiana Department of Health is aggressively pursuing every reasonable effort to combat the opioid epidemic; and

WHEREAS, scrambler therapy shall be studied to determine whether its use is an appropriate alternative treatment for pain, and if so, the feasibility of health insurance coverage of this treatment by government and commercial health plans in Louisiana.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby request the Louisiana Department of Health to study the use of scrambler therapy as an opioid alternative for the treatment of pain.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Louisiana Department of Health shall consult with the Louisiana Department of Insurance and the Louisiana Association of Health Plans in studying this matter and shall provide a report of its findings, including the use of scrambler therapy as an appropriate alternative treatment for pain and the feasibility of health insurance coverage of this treatment to the legislature no later than February 1, 2020.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the secretary of the Louisiana Department of Health, the commissioner of the Louisiana Department of Insurance, and the executive director of the Louisiana Association of Health Plans.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES