

2019 Regular Session

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 118

BY REPRESENTATIVES MIKE JOHNSON, ADAMS, ANDERS, ARMES, BILLIOT, TERRY BROWN, CARMODY, STEVE CARTER, COX, DUBUISSON, LANCE HARRIS, HILL, HOWARD, JEFFERSON, ROBERT JOHNSON, LARVADAIN, LEBAS, MAGEE, MCFARLAND, THOMAS, TURNER, WHITE, AND ZERINGUE AND SENATORS LONG AND LUNEAU

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To urge the office of behavioral health of the Louisiana Department of Health to take all measures necessary to ensure adequate access to substance use disorder treatment in central Louisiana pursuant to the impending closure of four residential treatment facilities in the Pineville area, and to report to the legislative committees on health and welfare concerning the actions it is taking to provide for this access.

WHEREAS, providing access to substance use disorder treatment is a vital public health priority of this state; and

WHEREAS, as evidenced by its creation of the Commission on Preventing Opioid Abuse through House Concurrent Resolution No. 113 of the 2016 Regular Session and the Advisory Council on Heroin and Opioid Prevention and Education, commonly known as the "HOPE Council", through Act No. 88 of the 2017 Regular Session, as well as its consideration of extensive legislation in this 2019 Regular Session on enhancing access to substance use disorder treatment, the Legislature of Louisiana earnestly strives to address the dire impacts of drug and alcohol abuse on families and communities of our state; and

WHEREAS, many central Louisiana residents, including legislators and other elected officials, first learned of the impending closure of four residential substance use disorder treatment centers in Pineville through local television media in late May of 2019; and

WHEREAS, these local news stories reported that the four privately owned treatment centers are scheduled to close on June 30, 2019; and

WHEREAS, officials with the Louisiana Department of Health have stated that the department has known of these impending closures for a period of months; and

WHEREAS, these officials also indicate that the department's office of behavioral health is working to ensure that no gap in services will occur for Medicaid enrollees currently receiving treatment at the four centers which are due to close, and that efforts are underway to build treatment capacity in the Pineville area back to current levels within three to six months of the closures; and

WHEREAS, it is extremely important for the state to succeed in the task of rebuilding residential treatment center capacity in central Louisiana, and for the Louisiana Department of Health to keep elected officials and the general public in the affected region apprised of where people may access the substance abuse treatment they need as existing facilities close and new facilities and services become available.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge the office of behavioral health of the Louisiana Department of Health to take all measures necessary to ensure adequate access to substance use disorder treatment in central Louisiana pursuant to the scheduled closure on June 30, 2019, of four residential treatment facilities in the Pineville area.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does also urge the Louisiana Department of Health to take all of the following actions in order to ensure continuity of care for current clients of the Pineville area treatment facilities that are scheduled to close and access to services for persons seeking treatment:

(1) Assist the treatment facilities that are scheduled to close in remaining open until new treatment facilities in the Pineville area are licensed and opened.

(2) Provide technical assistance to entities that apply for licensure of residential substance use disorder treatment facilities in the Pineville area and expedite those entities' license applications.

(3) Explore means by which existing properties that are underutilized or vacant but suitable for conversion for use as residential treatment facilities could be used as temporary treatment facilities until new permanent facilities are licensed and opened.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the office of behavioral health shall submit two reports to the House Committee on Health and Welfare and the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare concerning the efforts called for in this Resolution to provide continuity and rebuild substance use disorder treatment capacity in the Pineville area.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the office of behavioral health shall submit the first report required by this Resolution on or before September 30, 2019, and shall submit the second report required by this Resolution on or before December 31, 2019.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the secretary of the Louisiana Department of Health.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE