

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 32

BY SENATOR TALBOT

A RESOLUTION

To urge and request the Louisiana Department of Health to develop policies to protect the health and safety of long-term care facility residents and to provide guidance to the Department of Veterans Affairs in implementing policies for the health and safety of the residents in its long-term care facilities.

WHEREAS, COVID-19 has been recognized as a pandemic since March 11, 2020; and

WHEREAS, according to data supplied by the Louisiana Department of Health, the average age of Louisiana residents who have died from COVID-19 in Louisiana is 74 years old; and

WHEREAS, as of the date of filing of this Resolution, Louisiana has registered nearly two thousand nine hundred reported deaths from COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic has created additional challenges for people living with dementia, particularly those in nursing homes and assisted living facilities, as well as their families and caregivers; and

WHEREAS, nursing homes and assisted living facilities are referred to collectively as long-term care facilities; and

WHEREAS, long-term care facility residents with Alzheimer's and other dementias are particularly susceptible to COVID-19 due to their age, significantly increased likelihood of coexisting chronic conditions, and the congregate nature of these settings; and

WHEREAS, approximately ninety-two thousand people over the age of sixty-five in Louisiana are currently living with Alzheimer's; and

WHEREAS, nationwide, forty-eight percent of nursing home residents are living with dementia and forty-two percent of persons residing in assisted living facilities have Alzheimer's or other dementias; and

WHEREAS, long-term care facilities house this vulnerable population and, across the country, these facilities, their staff, and their residents are experiencing a crisis due to a lack of transparency, an inability to access necessary testing, inaccurate reporting, and other factors; and

WHEREAS, one-third of Louisiana's COVID-19 deaths have occurred in long-term care facilities; and

WHEREAS, the Louisiana Department of Health licenses and regulates nursing homes and assisted living facilities; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs operates and maintains nursing homes for veterans.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the Louisiana Department of Health to develop the following policies and mandates for long-term care facilities:

(1) Provide all long-term care facilities the ability to follow protocols of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), or other federal or state protocols, to use testing to verify that all residents and staff are free of COVID-19 infection, whether or not they are symptomatic.

(2) Require all long-term care facilities to report positive diagnoses of COVID-19 within twenty-four hours, update previously reported cases at least weekly, and proactively notify family members and any designated persons of changes.

(3) Provide CDC-recommended isolation protocols, including but not limited to cohorting for long-term care facility residents who test positive for COVID-19 for the purpose of keeping uninfected persons from sharing rooms with persons who are infected with the virus.

(4) Issue a care coordination protocol to guide long-term care facilities and hospitals during a transition between care settings when a long-term care facility resident must be moved from his residence to an acute care setting.

(5) Disseminate essential dementia care standards to aid provisional staff in the delivery of person-centered dementia care.

(6) Require long-term care facilities to address social isolation and ensure that people with dementia are able to communicate with designated family and friends.

(7) Establish a clear process for stakeholders and patient advocacy organizations to communicate pressing issues and implement solutions.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana requests the Louisiana Department of Health to do both of the following:

(1) Maintain a web platform that contains COVID-19 data from all long-term care facilities which is searchable down to the facility level.

(2) Provide guidance to the Department of Veterans Affairs in implementing policies for the health and safety of the residents in its long-term care facilities.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana requests the Department of Veterans Affairs to implement policies based upon the protocols of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, or other applicable federal or state protocols, for the health and safety of the residents of its long-term care facilities in conjunction with guidance from the Louisiana Department of Health.

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

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE