

2021 Regular Session

SENATE BILL NO. 150

BY SENATORS BARROW AND BOUDREAUX AND REPRESENTATIVE BAGLEY

Prefiled pursuant to Article III, Section 2(A)(4)(b)(i) of the Constitution of Louisiana.

GROUP BENEFITS PROGRAM. Requires the Office of Group Benefits to cover bariatric surgery techniques for the treatment of severe obesity. (8/1/21)

AN ACT

To enact R.S. 42:860, relative to the Office of Group Benefits; to require the Office of Group Benefits to provide coverage for the treatment of severe obesity; to provide definitions; and to provide for related matters.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

Section 1. R.S. 42:860 is hereby enacted to read as follows:

§860. Severe obesity; legislative findings; coverage required

A. The legislature hereby finds and declares that obesity is a significant health problem affecting hundreds of thousands of Louisiana residents. Severe obesity increases the mortality rate more than threefold, causes physical and emotional disability, and is often associated with comorbid health conditions, including hypertension, cardiopulmonary conditions, and diabetes, all of which compound the impact of obesity on longevity and quality of life. Louisiana residents with obesity are ninety percent more likely to have diabetes and fifty percent more likely to have high blood pressure than those who are not obese. Therapeutic interventions can alter the course and severity of obesity and severe obesity has been successfully treated through established surgical treatments.

1 **B. As used in this Section, the following terms shall have the following**
2 **meanings:**

3 **(1) "Severe obesity" means either of the following:**

4 **(a) A body mass index equal to or greater than forty kilograms per**
5 **meter squared.**

6 **(b) A body mass index equal to or greater than thirty-five kilograms per**
7 **meter squared along with an associated cormorbidity including but not limited**
8 **to hypertension, cardiopulmonary conditions, sleep apnea, or diabetes.**

9 **(2) "Body mass index" means a practical marker used to assess the**
10 **degree of obesity, calculated by dividing the weight in kilograms by the height**
11 **in meters squared.**

12 **C. The Office of Group Benefits programs shall offer a provision stating**
13 **that benefits shall be payable for the treatment of severe obesity through gastric**
14 **bypass surgery, sleeve gastrectomy, duodenal switch, SADI, or other methods**
15 **recognized by the American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery as**
16 **effective for the long-term reversal of severe obesity.**

17 **D. The Office of Group Benefits programs shall offer reimbursement to**
18 **hospitals, physicians, and clinics which is reasonable and customary.**

19 **E. The Office of Group Benefits programs shall require hospitals and**
20 **physicians to obtain and maintain accreditation from The American College of**
21 **Surgeons Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery Accreditation and Quality**
22 **Improvement Program.**

23 **F. Coverage of bariatric surgery shall require prior authorization.**

The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part
of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Martha S. Hess.

Proposed law defines "severe 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 (OGB) to offer a provision stating that

benefits shall be payable for the treatment of severe obesity through gastric bypass surgery, sleeve gastrectomy, duodenal switch, SADI, or other methods recognized by the American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery as effective for the long-term reversal of severe obesity.

Proposed law provides that the OGB programs shall require hospitals and physicians to obtain and maintain accreditation from The American College of Surgeons Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery Accreditation and Quality Improvement Program.

Proposed law provides that the coverage of bariatric surgery shall require prior authorization.

Effective August 1, 2021.

(Adds R.S. 42:860)