

Regular Session, 2009

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 238

BY REPRESENTATIVE TUCKER

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To support the progress of the Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH), the Louisiana Public Health Institute (LPHI) as DHH's local partner in administering the Primary Care Access and Stabilization Grant (PCASG) which expires on September 30, 2010, and the twenty-five public and private not-for-profit organizations participating in the PCASG in meeting essential primary medical and behavioral health care needs in the Greater New Orleans region (Jefferson, Orleans, St. Bernard, and Plaquemines parishes).

WHEREAS, Region One, as designated by DHH, has an estimated one hundred thirty thousand medically uninsured or underinsured individuals, eighty percent of whom come from working families; and

WHEREAS, residents of the Greater New Orleans region (Jefferson, Orleans, St. Bernard, and Plaquemines parishes) have historically had inadequate access to outpatient primary and behavioral health care services, contributing to poor health outcomes and overutilization of hospital emergency departments for conditions more effectively managed in an outpatient setting; and

WHEREAS, the federal Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) awarded one hundred million dollars to the state of Louisiana in July 2007 through the three-year PCASG to stabilize, expand, and improve community-based primary and mental health care services in DHH Region One in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina; and

WHEREAS, DHH chose the LPHI as its local partner to administer the grants to twenty-five public and private not-for-profit organizations that provide services without regard to a patient's ability to pay; and

WHEREAS, the participating organizations provide care for over one hundred fifty thousand individuals in Region One each year, forty-five percent of whom are uninsured or underinsured, and twenty-six percent of whom receive Medicaid; and

WHEREAS, the total volume of individuals served by these organizations for outpatient primary and behavioral health care has increased by fifteen percent every six months since March 2007; and

WHEREAS, the participating organizations have increased the number of service delivery sites from sixty-seven sites pre-grant to eighty-seven sites since June 2007, including primary and behavioral health care clinics, school-based health centers, and dental services; and

WHEREAS, thirty-six clinics have achieved recognition by the National Committee on Quality Assurance (NCQA) as Patient-Centered Medical Homes, representing the largest concentration of so recognized clinics in the United States; and

WHEREAS, LPHI, as the state's local partner in administering the grant, has provided staff support and infrastructure to coordinate and plan service delivery, has provided technical assistance, and has established the first management information system spanning the outpatient safety net in the New Orleans area that produces data necessary to monitor and improve performance; and

WHEREAS, the health system advances achieved and further expected through the PCASG are consistent and aligned with proposed reforms in the state's Medicaid program and the health care reform principles currently being considered at the federal level; and

WHEREAS, participating organizations employ approximately one thousand people including one hundred three primary care physicians and two hundred ninety-four other health professionals supporting outpatient primary and behavioral health care services; and

WHEREAS, participating organizations on average depend on grant funds for twenty-five percent of their total operating expenditures, and many organizations depend on grant funds for at least fifty percent of total operating expenditures each month; and

WHEREAS, the absence of federal funds provided by the PCASG and other time-limited recovery resources will result in an estimated thirty-eight million dollar operating gap needed to maintain current service levels for the period of October 2010 through September 2011; and

WHEREAS, the state's Louisiana Health First 1115 Demonstration Waiver application that is now pending at HHS contemplates replacement of approximately twenty-five percent of these funds through the use of Disproportionate Share Hospital (DSH) funds for outpatient care; and

WHEREAS, failure to identify replacement funding will result in the closure of clinics, significant decrease of services available for those patients who need them most, and the interruption of established patient relationships with community-based providers; and

WHEREAS, the loss of these services will further strain the already stretched resources of area hospital emergency departments; and

WHEREAS, the loss of these services will contribute to the deterioration of health and economic vitality of the Greater New Orleans area; and

WHEREAS, efforts to sustain the scope and scale of services offered by this network will likely depend on a combination of the following:

- (1) Increasing the number of individuals covered through Medicaid by enhancing Medicaid eligibility.
- (2) Increasing other forms of health insurance coverage.
- (3) Allowing flexibility to use Medicaid DSH dollars for outpatient primary and behavioral health care.
- (4) Increasing the number and scope of federally qualified health centers.
- (5) Redirecting state general fund dollars and maximizing opportunities for accessing new federal dollars to support services.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby express its support for DHH, the LPHI as DHH's local partner in administering the grant, and the twenty-five public and private not-for-profit organizations participating in the PCASG, which expires September 30, 2010, for their substantial progress in meeting essential primary medical and behavioral health care needs in Region One (Jefferson, Orleans, St. Bernard, and Plaquemines parishes).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the legislature supports continuing efforts at the local, state, and federal levels to create a sustainable financing model which will support high-quality, community-based health care in the Greater New Orleans region once the PCASG expires in September 2010.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE