

Regular Session, 2002

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 47

BY SENATOR SCHEDLER

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To urge and request the Department of Health and Hospitals to reapply for a Medicaid Infrastructure Grant for calendar years 2003 through 2006 to develop the infrastructure necessary to establish and implement an optional categorically needy Medicaid eligibility group for working individuals with disabilities, commonly referred to as the Medicaid Buy-in program.

WHEREAS, the Ticket to Work and Work Incentive Improvements Act of 1999 (P.L. 106-170) was intended to enhance work incentives for persons with disabilities by changing programs operated by the Social Security Administration, the Department of Labor, and the Department of Health and Human Services; and

WHEREAS, Section 201 of the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999 created two new optional categorically needy Medicaid eligibility groups to eliminate barriers to employment for individuals with disabilities by improving access to health care; and

WHEREAS, securing and maintaining competitive employment in an integrated setting remains a significant challenge for individuals with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, current statistics show that three out of every four individuals with significant disabilities are not working; and

WHEREAS, one of the major barriers for individuals with disabilities

is the fear of losing comprehensive health care coverage if they work; and

WHEREAS, while significant improvements are needed in Medicaid services to support people with disabilities in their competitive employment efforts, thousands of Louisiana citizens with disabilities who want to work and to pay taxes are forced to stay idle and to depend on state and federal assistance; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana citizens with disabilities represent an untapped and often skilled labor pool; and

WHEREAS, twenty-six states throughout the nation have already implemented or established Medicaid Buy-in programs; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Health and Human Services, Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services, has grant funds available to states to assist in the planning and designing of Medicaid Buy-in programs which require no state matching funds for such infrastructure development; and

WHEREAS, such Medicaid Buy-in programs allow beneficiaries with disabilities to pay a premium and to retain their health care benefits, and allow individuals with disabilities to contribute tax dollars by returning to the workforce.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the Department of Health and Hospitals to reapply for a federal grant to develop the infrastructure necessary to establish and implement an optional categorically needy Medicaid eligibility group for working individuals with disabilities.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Health and Hospitals meet required personal assistance services benchmarks jointly agreed to with the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services, in order for the Department of Health and Hospitals to receive additional years of grant funding.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Health and Hospitals design a Medicaid Buy-in program with input from consumers, advocates and other Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act stakeholders for implementation effective July 1, 2003 and to include the program as a new and expanded program in its budget request for the state fiscal year 2004.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Advisory Council established by the Department of Health and Hospitals in response to the provisions of Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 79 of the 2001 Regular Session be continued, so long as there is support funding available through federal grants, to provide advice, make recommendations, assist with program outreach and education efforts, and participate in program review and evaluation; the Advisory Council to continue to meet at regularly scheduled intervals.

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

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES