

ONE HUNDRED NINTH LEGISLATURE

SECOND SESSION

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION 482

Introduced by Bostar, 29.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this resolution is to propose an interim study relating to insurance coverage practices and policies and reimbursement structures for access to nonopioid treatment options to address opioid use, overdose outcomes, and access to care across Nebraska.

The United States and the State of Nebraska continue to face a significant public health challenge related to opioid addiction, drug overdoses, and substance use disorders. Opioid medications include both illegal substances, such as heroin and illicitly manufactured fentanyl, as well as prescription medications used to treat pain. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention of the United States Public Health Services of the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Nebraska reported approximately one hundred fifteen to one hundred thirty-three drug overdose deaths annually in recent years, with opioids involved in a substantial share of those deaths and synthetic opioids, such as fentanyl, contributing to a growing proportion.

Disparities in opioid use, overdose, and treatment access exist across Nebraska populations, including differences based on race and ethnicity, geography, age, and socioeconomic status. Socioeconomic factors include income level, insurance coverage, housing stability, and employment and affect both the risk of substance use disorders and access to prevention, treatment, and recovery services. Certain demographic groups, including working-age adults, males, and individuals between twenty-five to forty-four years of age, have experienced higher rates of overdose mortality in Nebraska. Disparities also exist in access to nonopioid pain management therapies, which have been identified as safe and effective alternatives for many conditions, but may be subject to coverage limitations or provider availability constraints. The

opioid prescribing rate in Nebraska and reliance by Nebraska residents on pain medications, estimated to be approximately forty-two prescriptions per one hundred persons, reflect ongoing exposure to opioid medications in the state. Expanding awareness of, and equitable access to, nonopioid treatment options and substance use disorder services may reduce reliance on opioids and improve patient outcomes. The State of Nebraska and the Legislature play a critical role in ensuring equitable access to prevention, treatment, recovery, and pain management services across all communities and setting policies to accomplish such goals.

The study shall include, but need not be limited to:

(1) A review of insurance coverage practices, medicaid policies, and reimbursement structures to assess whether barriers exist for individuals in Nebraska to access nonopioid pain management therapies or substance use disorder treatment services;

(2) An examination of the disparities in opioid use, overdose outcomes, and access to care across Nebraska;

(3) An examination on how to expand access to nonopioid pain medications and pain management, including nonopioid pain treatment awareness and patient education through tools such as nonopioid directives, among others; and

(4) Any statutory or administrative changes that may be needed to help address opioid use, overdose outcomes, and access to care across Nebraska.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE ONE HUNDRED NINTH LEGISLATURE OF NEBRASKA, SECOND SESSION:

1. That the Banking, Commerce and Insurance Committee of the Legislature shall be designated to conduct an interim study to carry out the purposes of this resolution.

2. That the committee shall upon the conclusion of its study make a report of its findings, together with its recommendations, to the Legislative Council or Legislature.