

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 170

By Yarbro

A RESOLUTION to authorize the governor to expand Medicaid eligibility in accordance with the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act to fully combat the opioid crisis in Tennessee.

WHEREAS, the opioid crisis in the United States has been declared a national emergency by the President; and

WHEREAS, the Tennessee Department of Health has recorded 6,036 drug overdose deaths since 2012 with 1,451 occurring in 2015 alone; and

WHEREAS, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention cites the 13.8 percent increase in Tennessee overdose deaths from 2014-2015 as "statistically significant"; and

WHEREAS, it is estimated that the number of drug overdoses is underreported due to factors such as the cost of requesting toxicology reports in rural communities with limited funds; and

WHEREAS, the Tennessee Department of Health cites fourteen non-fatal overdoses for every overdose death; and

WHEREAS, law enforcement and addiction specialists have noted that people who find it harder and more expensive to get the prescribed drugs are moving to heroin and fentanyl; and

WHEREAS, the number of heroin-related arrests jumped from a total of 491 in 2012 to a total of 2,119 in 2016; and

WHEREAS, lack of access to health care is a barrier to addiction services for residents of Tennessee who wish to seek treatment; and

WHEREAS, states that have expanded Medicaid have seen an increase in the number of citizens seeking substance abuse treatment; and

WHEREAS, out of the states that have expanded Medicaid, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Maryland, Ohio, and West Virginia have seen 35-50 percent of medication-assisted addiction treatment in their states paid for by Medicaid; and

WHEREAS, Medicaid provides addiction services such as inpatient detox, intensive outpatient treatment, and other services related to health problems arising from addiction; and

WHEREAS, the Harvard School of Public Health cites that out of 11 million Americans that have benefited from Medicaid expansion, 2.8 million of those enrollees have sought addiction treatment services; and

WHEREAS, in 2015, the General Assembly declined to pass Insure Tennessee, a Medicaid expansion plan that would have allowed 300,000 Tennesseans to obtain health insurance; and

WHEREAS, as of August 31, 2017, Tennessee has forfeited \$3.345 billion by declining to expand Medicaid since the passage of the Affordable Care Act; and

WHEREAS, nine rural hospitals have closed in Tennessee in the last three years, decreasing treatment options for residents suffering an overdose; and

WHEREAS, Medicaid expansion could bring addiction treatment services to Tennesseans in need and reduce the number of overdose deaths in our State; and

WHEREAS, the Affordable Care Act is the law of the land for the foreseeable future; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that the governor is authorized to expand Medicaid eligibility in accordance with the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, Pub. L. No. 111-148.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the governor is authorized to negotiate with the centers for Medicare and Medicaid services with respect to the terms of Medicaid expansion.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the General Assembly supports the discretion of the governor to expand Medicaid in the State of Tennessee to fully combat the opioid crisis.