

ONE HUNDRED EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

FIRST SESSION

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION 213

Introduced by Ibach, 44; Dover, 19.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this resolution is to propose an interim study to review how the State of Nebraska can assist licensed hospitals in converting to the rural emergency hospital designation under the federal Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021.

A hospital closure in a community can mean the loss of both a local emergency department and other health care services. Nebraska has witnessed two hospitals permanently close in the last eight years. Reimbursement rates for hospitals are insufficient and have not kept up with inflation and studies have shown that Nebraska has several hospitals on the cusp of closing.

The rural emergency hospital designation allows rural hospitals to maintain outpatient and emergency department payment from medicare without a requirement of inpatient acute care services. For effective rural health care, the State of Nebraska needs to support assisting critical access hospitals that may be interested in converting to the rural emergency hospital designation instead of closing due to financial constraints.

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

(1) Reviewing low inpatient volumes, low net patient revenues, and the recent history of financial distress for rural hospitals;

(2) Reviewing inpatient and outpatient reimbursement rates for rural hospitals, when such rates were last updated, and if such rates are sufficient for maintaining rural hospitals;

(3) Developing and reviewing an action plan to determine if conversion to the rural emergency hospital designation is appropriate for a rural hospital;

(4) Reviewing grants and funding sources for assisting rural hospitals with the expenses of converting to the rural emergency hospital designation;

and

(5) Determining ways for the State of Nebraska to assist in a comprehensive community engagement process to help facilitate hospital conversion to the rural emergency hospital designation.

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

1. That the Health and Human Services 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.