

By: Hinojosa, et al.

S.C.R. No. 4

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1 WHEREAS, The rapid spread of the COVID-19 delta variant is
2 threatening to overwhelm hospitals as they struggle with low
3 staffing levels and the related shortage of ICU beds; and

4 WHEREAS, Across Texas, there are 23,000 more unfilled
5 registered nurse positions than there are job-seeking nurses,
6 according to the Texas Workforce Commission; medical personnel are
7 suffering from severe burnout as the pandemic drags on, driving
8 high rates of turnover; because other states are also struggling
9 with the delta variant, our understaffed hospitals struggle to hire
10 contract nurses or transfer patients when necessary; and

11 WHEREAS, The registered nurse shortage threatens to both
12 decrease access to health care and lower its quality; even if a
13 hospital does have adequate ICU beds, it can only use those that
14 have adequate staff coverage; and

15 WHEREAS, In 2020, as the COVID-19 pandemic escalated, the
16 Texas Division of Emergency Management and Department of State
17 Health Services provided communities with guidance, oversight, and
18 resources to support hospital care; using federal relief funds,
19 DSHS contracted with staffing companies to recruit medical
20 professionals for deployment to COVID-19 hot spots around the
21 state; and

22 WHEREAS, Once vaccination efforts began to reduce patient
23 numbers in 2021, the state started to demobilize supplemental
24 staff; however, not long after the state's last nurse contracts

1 ended, the delta variant commenced its rampage through the
2 still-considerable ranks of the unvaccinated; then, in a July 29,
3 2021, letter, TDEM appeared to shift the pandemic response to
4 county and city leaders, leaving them to address the delta variant
5 surge by seeking and disbursing federal Coronavirus Local Fiscal
6 Recovery funds; however, throughout the pandemic, state guidance,
7 management, and oversight have proven crucial in developing a
8 coherent response, and the lack of same is likely to result in
9 confusion and inefficiency, as well as deleterious bidding wars and
10 staff poaching among more densely populated communities with better
11 resources and rural areas already desperately scrambling to compete
12 for scarce staff; and

13 WHEREAS, The urgency of the current public health crisis
14 requires all levels of government to work together under clear
15 guidance and coordination, and the continued leadership of TDEM and
16 DSHS is essential to ensure that CLFR funds are utilized with
17 maximum effectiveness and that all Texans have access to
18 high-quality health care at this critical juncture; now, therefore,
19 be it

20 RESOLVED, That the 87th Legislature of the State of Texas,
21 2nd Called Session, hereby direct the Texas Division of Emergency
22 Management and Department of State Health Services to establish and
23 maintain a system of guidance, coordination, and oversight to
24 address hospital understaffing and ICU bed shortages during the
25 COVID-19 pandemic; and, be it further

26 RESOLVED, That the Texas secretary of state forward official
27 copies of this resolution to the chief of the Texas Division of

S.C.R. No. 4

1 Emergency Management and to the commissioner of the Texas
2 Department of State Health Services.