REQUESTING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HEALTH, WELFARE, AND
LABOR STUDY, REVIEW, AND RECOMMEND PROTOCOL AND PROCEDURES TO
CREATE STANDARDIZATION AND CONSISTENCY WHEN TRANSPORTING
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PATIENTS IN A NONEMERGENCY SITUATION.

WHEREAS, resources necessary for emergency medical services are being
utilized in transportation of nonemergency behavioral health patients and may
place the public in a precarious situation if a medical emergency arises
while personnel and equipment are involved in the nonemergency transportation
of a behavioral health patient; and

WHEREAS, these nonemergency behavioral health transportation situations
can result in emergency medical services personnel and equipment being out of
their coverage area for long periods of time, leaving minimal resources to
cover an area in case of a true emergency situation; and

WHEREAS, these nonemergency behavioral health transports take a toll on
emergency medical services personnel who are already overextended and nearing
the end of a shift; and

WHEREAS, a study of possible solutions to the issues arising from the
use of emergency medical personnel and equipment to provide nonemergency
transportation for behavioral health patients is necessary; and

WHEREAS, Act 1041 of 2019 created the "Task Force on Transportation of
Nonemergency Behavioral Health Patients"; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of the Task Force on Transportation of
Nonemergency Behavioral Health Patients was to examine and identify areas of
needed reform with regard to the protocol, procedures, and mechanisms in
place for the nonemergency transportation of behavioral health patients to
behavioral health facilities; and
WHEREAS, the Task Force on Transportation of Nonemergency Behavioral Health Patients was required to:

(1) Study practices and protocols of other states with regard to nonemergency transportation of behavioral health patients;
(2) Consult stakeholders and interested parties in the state involved in the treatment and transportation of behavioral health patients;
(3) Develop best practices and recommended protocol, including identifying areas of needed statutory or regulatory reform with regard to the nonemergency transportation of behavioral health patients; and
(4) File a report on the task force’s activities, findings, and recommendations; and

WHEREAS, Representative Perry and Senator Hickey chaired the Task Force on Transportation of Nonemergency Behavioral Health Patients; and

WHEREAS, on February 19, 2020, Representative Perry and Senator Hickey gave a presentation to the Senate Committee on Public Health, Welfare, and Labor, the House Committee on Public Health, Welfare, and Labor, the Senate Committee on Insurance and Commerce, and the House Committee on Insurance and Commerce on the activities, findings, and recommendations of the Task Force on Transportation of Nonemergency Behavioral Health Patients; and

WHEREAS, during the February presentation, it was determined that further study and review are needed on protocol and procedures to create standardization and consistency when transporting behavioral health patients in a nonemergency situation; and

WHEREAS, the Task Force on Transportation of Nonemergency Behavioral Health Patients expired on March 1, 2020; and

WHEREAS, the General Assembly should further study and review the complex topic of transportation of nonemergency behavioral health patients to ensure the safety and welfare of the citizens of Arkansas,

NOW THEREFORE,
BE IT PROPOSED BY THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HEALTH, WELFARE, AND LABOR
OF THE NINETY-SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

THAT the Senate Committee on Public Health, Welfare, and Labor study, review, and recommend protocol and procedures to create standardization and consistency when transporting behavioral health patients in a nonemergency situation.

BE IT FURTHER PROPOSED:

THAT Representative Perry and Senator Hickey, who served as chairs on the expired Task Force on Transportation of Nonemergency Behavioral Health Patients, as well as the former members of the expired Task Force on Transportation of Nonemergency Behavioral Health Patients aid the Senate Committee on Public Health, Welfare, and Labor in studying, reviewing, and recommending protocol and procedures to create standardization and consistency when transporting behavioral health patients in a nonemergency situation.

Respectfully submitted,

Senator Missy Irvin
District 18

Prepared by: JMB/JMB