

1 SJR79  
2 169503-2  
3 By Senators Melson, Hightower, McClendon, Holtzclaw,  
4 Livingston, Glover, Williams, Scofield, Pittman, Holley,  
5 Brewbaker, Reed, Beasley, Allen, Shelnutt, Coleman, Dial,  
6 Waggoner, Marsh, Bussman, Orr, Chambliss, Stutts, Figures,  
7 Whatley, Singleton, Albritton, Sanders, Dunn and Blackwell  
8 RFD:  
9 First Read: 21-MAY-15

1 SJR79

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4 ENROLLED, SJR79,

5 URGING THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS TO TAKE ALL  
6 NECESSARY MEASURES TO DELAY THE MANDATED IMPLEMENTATION OF  
7 ICD-10 AND LESSEN THE BURDEN ON ALABAMA MEDICAL PRACTICES.  
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9 WHEREAS, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid  
10 Services (CMS) is forcing an unfunded mandate on the health  
11 care community known as the International Classification of  
12 Diseases and Related Problems, 10th Version (ICD-10) on  
13 October 1, 2015, to replace the ICD-9 System currently in use;  
14 and

15 WHEREAS, implementing ICD-10 requires physicians and  
16 their office staffs to transition to a system that makes use  
17 of 68,000 new diagnostic codes, a four-fold increase from the  
18 current ICD-9 system that hosts approximately 13,000  
19 diagnostic codes, requiring an abundance of costly and  
20 time-consuming education, software, coder training, and  
21 testing for conversion; and

22 WHEREAS, physicians, who are the actual individuals  
23 diagnosing and treating patients, widely agree that this  
24 conversion will not improve patient care and that such an  
25 overnight four-fold increase in diagnostic codes could lead to

coding errors and further erode the relationships between patients and their doctors; and

WHEREAS, ICD-10, with its four-fold increase in diagnostic codes, could provide insurers four times as many reasons to deny necessary medical services and procedures for patients for coding errors; and

WHEREAS, this unfunded mandate requiring transition to ICD-10 will hit private medical practices hardest forcing a significant and unrecoverable financial investment which, depending on medical practice size, can range from \$80,000 to approximately \$2.7 million, without any assistance from the government for the mandated transition; and

WHEREAS, the United States is the only country adopting ICD-10 that is tying the use of a diagnostic coding system with a medical billing system; and

WHEREAS, the CMS has anticipated significant claims and payment disruptions to physicians and others, causing an increased amount of administrative constraints to be placed upon physicians and their office staff, ultimately hurting small business medical practices and impeding access to care for Alabama patients; and

WHEREAS, ICD-10 transition could not come at a worse time, as many medical practices are maximizing administrative and financial resources to comply with the challenges of the

1 Affordable Care Act and electronic health record mandates; now  
2 therefore,

3 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA, BOTH  
4 HOUSES THEREOF CONCURRING, That we hereby urge the United  
5 States Congress to delay the implementation of ICD-10 and  
6 create an impartial committee to study the problems with  
7 implementation and develop recommendations to address the many  
8 unintended consequences that have not been adequately  
9 evaluated.

10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That if a delay of ICD-10  
11 implementation is not feasible, we urge Congress to allow a  
12 two-year grace period for ICD-10 transition, during which time  
13 physicians will not be penalized for errors, mistakes, and/or  
14 malfunctions of the system, and that physician payments will  
15 also not be withheld based on ICD-10 coding mistakes,  
16 providing for a true transition where physicians and their  
17 offices can work with ICD-10 over a period of time and not be  
18 penalized.

19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That we urge Congress to  
20 consider appropriating funds to cover the significant cost and  
21 administrative burden of this unfunded mandate on medical  
22 practices.

23 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this  
24 resolution be made available to all members of the Alabama

1 Congressional Delegation as well as to all members of  
2 Congress.

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President and Presiding Officer of the Senate

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Speaker of the House of Representatives

SJR79

Senate 21-MAY-15

I hereby certify that the within Senate Joint Resolution  
originated in and was adopted by the Senate.

Patrick Harris  
Secretary

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House of Representatives  
Adopted: 26-MAY-15

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By: Senator Melson