

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

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

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

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

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

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

22 WHEREAS, ICD-10 transition could not come at a worse
23 time, as many medical practices are maximizing administrative
24 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

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SJR79

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Senate 21-MAY-15

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

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Patrick Harris
Secretary

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House of Representatives

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Adopted: 26-MAY-15

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By: Senator Melson