

House Committee on Health and Welfare

Minutes of Meeting
2023 1st Extraordinary Session
February 3, 2023

I. CALL TO ORDER

Representative Lawrence A. “Larry” Bagley, chairman of the House Committee on Health and Welfare, called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. in Room 4, in the state capitol in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

II. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Representative Lawrence A. “Larry” Bagley, chairman
Representative Roy Daryl Adams
Representative Raymond J. Crews
Representative Michael Charles Echols
Representative C. Travis Johnson
Representative Ed Larvadain, III
Representative Dustin Miller
Representative Patricia “Pat” Moore
Representative Robert “Bob” Owen
Representative Thomas A. Pressly
Representative Laurie Schlegel
Representative Larry Selders
Representative Joseph A. Stagni
Representative Christopher Turner, vice chairman

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Representative Robby Carter
Representative Kenny R. Cox
Representative Jason Hughes
Representative Wayne McMahan

OTHER MEMBERS PRESENT:

Speaker Clay Schexnayder
Representative Adrian Fisher

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Taylor Chrisman, attorney
Meah Johnson, attorney
Felicie Jackson, executive assistant

ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES PRESENT:

Nevonda Reed Dobard, division director
A. Greg Riley, executive director
Faye Talbot, sergeant at arms
Vivian Hurst, sergeant at arms
Danny Leming, assistant chief, sergeant at arms

III. DISCUSSION**Discussion of the emergency rule adopted by the Louisiana Department of Health, Office of Public Health, on January 20, 2023, relative to LAC 49:I.Chapter 5 - Registration of Foods, Drugs, Cosmetics, and Prophylactic Devices.**

Stephen Russo, Louisiana Department of Health (LDH), 628 N. Fourth Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 342-1115, spoke for information only. Mr. Russo explained the acts from the 2019 through the 2022 Regular Sessions regarding hemp.

Representative C. Travis Johnson asked questions of the panel inquiring about what LDH staff was doing to remain up-to-date and educated and keeping the legislature informed of the progress.

Mike Vidrine, LDH, 628 N. Fourth Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 342-9509, spoke for information only. Mr. Vidrine addressed Representative C. Travis Johnson's concerns.

Representative C. Travis Johnson continued his line of questioning to which several panel members at the witness table engaged in dialog and provided answers.

Representative Turner asked about staffing and labels.

Justin Gremillion, LDH, 628 N. Fourth Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 342-9509, spoke for information only. Mr. Gremillion answered Representative Turner. Representative Turner had additional questions regarding control over retail products and how they were approved. Mr. Gremillion explained the process.

Representatives Echols, Stagni, and D. Miller continued to ask questions about site visits, vape pens, and other details of the emergency rules. Witnesses from LDH conversed with the committee about their concerns.

Tonya Joiner, LDH, 628 N. Fourth Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 342-9509, spoke for information only. Ms. Joiner addressed some of Representative Miller's questions and concerns.

Speaker Schexnayder made comments about the beginning and current status of hemp regulations regarding definitions, sales, permits, prohibitions, dosages, staffing, labels, and etc. Speaker Schexnayder expressed his wishes to postpone the emergency rule, allow LDH to work with the legislature on the rule, and schedule an oversight meeting in three weeks.

Representative Turner offered a motion to postpone a decision on the emergency rule to allow the committee and LDH to work together on the rule, then meet in three weeks to discuss. Without objection, the motion passed by a vote of 14 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Bagley, Adams, Crews, Echols, Travis Johnson, Larvadain, Dustin Miller, Moore, Robert Owen, Pressly, Schlegel, Selders, Stagni, and Turner voted yea.

Blaine Jennings, Virgin Hemp Farms, P.O. Box 129, Milton, LA 70558, (337) 849-6481, spoke in support of the emergency rules.

Discussion of continuing access to telehealth services offered by mental health providers regulated by the Louisiana Department of Health, Office of Behavioral Health.

Representative Pressly inquired about telehealth offered for mental health patients.

Karen Stubbs, LDH, 628 N. Fourth Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 342-9509, spoke for information only.

Representative Pressly asked questions about the Addictive Disorder Regulatory Authority (ADRA) board and promulgating rules. Ms. Stubbs answered and stated that the department would commit to working with ADA.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 1 in support and 1 for information only.

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

V. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Representative Pressly offered a motion to adjourn. Without objection, the motion passed by a vote of 14 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Bagley, Adams, Crews, Echols, Travis Johnson, Larvadain, Dustin Miller, Moore, Robert Owen, Pressly, Schlegel, Selders, Stagni, and Turner voted yea.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:37 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chairman Lawrence A. “Larry” Bagley
House Committee on Health and Welfare

Date adopted: April 20, 2023