

1                   **CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON DEATHS FROM**  
2                   **OPIOID-INDUCED POSTOPERATIVE RESPIRATORY**  
3                   **DEPRESSION**

4                   2018 GENERAL SESSION

5                   STATE OF UTAH

6                   **Chief Sponsor: Kevin T. Van Tassell**

7                   House Sponsor: Scott H. Chew

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9                   **LONG TITLE**

10                  **General Description:**

11                  This concurrent resolution of the Legislature and the Governor recognizes the  
12                  devastating effects of the sudden death of Utah residents from opioid-induced  
13                  postoperative respiratory depression, urges further study of this issue, and encourages  
14                  physicians to prescribe in-home monitoring devices for patients who are discharged  
15                  with opioids after surgery.

16                  **Highlighted Provisions:**

17                  This resolution:

- 18                  ▶ recognizes the effects of sudden death from opioid-induced postoperative  
19                  respiratory depression;
- 20                  ▶ urges the Department of Health, hospitals, practitioners, and academics to further  
21                  study this issue; and
- 22                  ▶ encourages physicians to prescribe in-home monitoring devices for patients who are  
23                  discharged with opioids after surgery.

24                  **Special Clauses:**

25                  None

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27                  *Be it resolved by the Legislature of the state of Utah, the Governor concurring therein:*



28 WHEREAS, opioids have been prescribed without understanding their full impact on  
29 the human body, leading to a public health crisis on a scale that has never before been seen in  
30 this country;

31 WHEREAS, President Donald J. Trump has declared the nation's opioid crisis to be a  
32 public health emergency;

33 WHEREAS, the people of the state of Utah continue to be devastated by addiction and  
34 deaths resulting from the use of opioids;

35 WHEREAS, opioids have been known to affect the part of the brain that regulates  
36 breathing, resulting in respiratory depression and death, particularly in patients who are  
37 recovering from a surgical operation;

38 WHEREAS, in November 2014, the World Health Organization issued a warning about  
39 the risk of respiratory depression and death from opioid use;

40 WHEREAS, following the unexpected death of their son, Parker Stewart, from  
41 respiratory depression after taking the prescribed dose of an opioid after a routine surgery,  
42 members of his family have advocated tirelessly to raise awareness of the risks of death from  
43 opioid-induced postoperative respiratory depression;

44 WHEREAS, many other families have had to face the sudden death of a loved one from  
45 respiratory depression after taking one or two doses of an opioid;

46 WHEREAS, deaths from opioid-induced postoperative respiratory depression are often  
47 misdiagnosed as pneumonia and are therefore under-reported;

48 WHEREAS, the use of a low-cost, in-home monitoring device to alert a caregiver of  
49 low oxygen saturation would have prevented many of these needless deaths;

50 WHEREAS, in August 2012, the Joint Commission, an independent, not-for-profit  
51 organization that accredits and certifies nearly 21,000 health care organizations and programs  
52 in the United States, published a Sentinel Event Alert to health care professionals urging  
53 specific steps to prevent serious complications and deaths from opioid use, including  
54 monitoring patient oxygenization due to the higher risk of respiratory depression;

55 WHEREAS, advances in technology have made in-home monitoring devices that  
56 satisfy the recommendations of the Joint Commission accessible and affordable for hospitals,  
57 physicians, and patients;

58 WHEREAS, capnography and acoustic monitoring are increasingly becoming the

59 standard of care to detect changes in breathing, and the United States Food and Drug  
60 Administration has recently approved devices using these technologies for in-home use; and

61 WHEREAS, respiratory care providers and other health care professionals, particularly  
62 from Intermountain Health Care and Uintah Basin Healthcare, have taken proactive measures  
63 to protect against the risk of death from opioid-induced respiratory depression:

64 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of the state of Utah, the  
65 Governor concurring therein, urges the Department of Health to convene a multi-stakeholder,  
66 cross-sector group dedicated to gathering data and best practices to avoid deaths from  
67 opioid-induced postoperative respiratory depression.

68 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that health care professionals be advised about the  
69 dangers of opioid-induced respiratory depression and the need for in-home monitoring of  
70 patients who are prescribed an opioid after surgery.

71 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that hospitals and academics are urged to collect more  
72 data about the risks of taking an opioid after surgery and the deaths resulting from  
73 opioid-induced postoperative respiratory depression, especially regarding the effects of the  
74 opioid on a patient's breathing.

75 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the state of Utah shall make every effort to avoid  
76 the continuing needless deaths that result from the use of opioids throughout the state.

77 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be sent to the Department  
78 of Health and to the Utah Medical Association for distribution to the association's members.

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**Legislative Review Note**  
**Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel**