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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 153

Senate Amendments in [] — February 15, 2000

Requesting the Department of Health Professions to study the need for an appropriate level of regulation for Certified Occupational Therapy Assistants.

Patron—Houck

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, occupational therapy is the use of purposeful activity or interventions designed to achieve functional outcomes which promote health, prevent injury or disability, and which develop, improve, sustain, or restore the highest possible level of independence of any individual who has an injury, illness, cognitive impairment, psychosocial dysfunction, mental illness, developmental or learning disability, physical disability, or other disorder or condition; and

WHEREAS, occupation therapy services include assessment and treatment, interventions designed to restore daily living skills, developing and improving basic functional areas, and educating family members in providing assistance; and

WHEREAS, Virginia currently licenses occupational therapists, but assistants are not licensed but, instead, may choose voluntary certification; and

WHEREAS, within the past eight years, the number of college programs in Virginia offering occupational therapy assistant programs has tripled and currently there are 500 occupational therapy assistants in the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, the trend of nontraditional workplace environments, change in the healthcare delivery system, and the increase in the number of occupational therapy assistants has changed the role of assistants; and

WHEREAS, the lack of regulation is seen by some to be a contributing factor to the reluctance of third-party payors to reimburse for services by assistants because of the lack of standards for training and enforcement; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the [~~Board~~ Department] of Health Professions is requested to study the need for an appropriate level of regulation for certified occupational therapy assistants.

All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Department of Health Professions for this study, upon request.

The Department of Health Professions shall complete its work in time to submit its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the 2001 Session of the General Assembly as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents.

ENGROSSED

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