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HOUSE BILL NO. 8

House Amendments in [] — January 31, 2002

A BILL to amend and reenact § 37.1-256.1 of the Code of Virginia, relating to the Inspector General for Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services.

Patron Prior to Engrossment—Delegate Hamilton

Referred to Committee on Health, Welfare and Institutions

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**1. That § 37.1-256.1 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:****§ 37.1-256.1. Reports.**

A. The Inspector General shall prepare, not later than May 31 and November 30 of each year, semiannual reports summarizing the activities of the Office during the immediately preceding six-month periods ending March 31 and September 30. Such reports shall include, but need not be limited to:

1. A description of significant problems, abuses and deficiencies related to the administration of the programs and services of the facilities operated by the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services and providers as defined in § 37.1-179 during the reporting period;

2. A description of the recommendations for corrective actions made by the Office during the reporting period with respect to significant problems, abuses or deficiencies identified;

3. An identification of each significant recommendation described in previous reports under this section on which corrective action has not been completed;

4. A summary of matters referred to the attorneys for the Commonwealth and law enforcement and actions taken on them during the reporting period; *and*

5. Information concerning the numbers of complaints received and types of investigations completed by the Office during the reporting period.

B. Within thirty days of the transmission of each semiannual report, the Inspector General shall make copies of such report available to the public upon request and at a reasonable cost.

C. The Inspector General shall report immediately to the Governor and the Commissioner of the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services whenever the Office becomes aware of particularly serious problems, abuses or deficiencies relating to the administration of the programs and services of the facilities operated by the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services and providers as defined in § 37.1-179.

D. The Inspector General may conduct such additional investigations and make such reports relating to the administration of the programs and services of the facilities operated by the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services and providers as defined in § 37.1-179 as are, in the judgment of the Inspector General, necessary or desirable.

E. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the reports, information or documents required by or under this section shall be transmitted directly to the Governor *and the General Assembly by the Inspector General without preliminary clearances or approvals. The Inspector General shall, insofar as feasible, provide copies of the semiannual reports to the Governor in advance of the date for their submission to the General Assembly to provide a reasonable opportunity for comments of the Governor to be appended to the reports when submitted to the General Assembly.*

F. Records that are confidential under federal or state law shall be maintained as confidential by the Inspector General, and shall not be further disclosed, except as permitted by law.

G. ~~Prior to releasing any reports or records to the public or members of the General Assembly pursuant to the provisions of this section, the Inspector General shall provide such information to the Virginia Attorney General and receive assurances from the Attorney General that the release of such information will not violate confidentiality requirements under federal or state law.~~

[*G. The Inspector General's written reports accompanying the individual facility inspections performed by the Office pursuant to § 37.1-257 shall be transmitted to the Governor for review and comment as deemed necessary by the Governor. The Inspector General shall report on the general conditions, staffing patterns and access to active and contemporary treatment of each facility, at a minimum, on an annual basis. The Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services shall comment in writing on any recommendations made by the Inspector General.*]

ENGROSSED

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