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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 123

Offered January 9, 2002

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Requesting the Special Advisory Commission on Mandated Health Insurance Benefits to examine and encourage continuing education of third party payers regarding adequate reimbursement for behavioral evaluations and ADHD and study the feasibility and appropriateness of expanding reimbursement for child evaluations to address an appropriate range of mental health services, including comprehensive assessment by clinical psychologists.

Patrons—Tata, Darner, O'Bannon, Stump and Weatherholtz

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, increased treatment of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) during the past decade has been attributed to increased awareness of the condition, better diagnostic criteria and treatment guidelines, more diagnoses among adults and girls, and increased compliance with one-a-day treatments; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Surgeon General's National Action Agenda, released in early 2001, estimated that fewer than one in five children receive the treatment needed for mental illness, including ADHD; and

WHEREAS, the complexities of reimbursement and co-payment requirements may deter some parents from seeking the appropriate medical and psychiatric evaluation for their children; and

WHEREAS, adequate insurance coverage for child behavioral evaluations is essential to help ensure that the children of the Commonwealth have access to the care and services needed for good mental and physical health; and

WHEREAS, a recent study by the Center for Pediatric Research in Norfolk indicates not only that Virginia ranks in the highest quartile in the nation for Ritalin prescriptions, but that ADHD is over-diagnosed and over-treated in the Tidewater region, and perhaps in 36 states; and

WHEREAS, such findings may suggest a need for improved access to appropriate child behavioral evaluations to more accurately determine those behaviors that might be better treated without medication; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to § 2.2-2504, the Special Advisory Commission on Mandated Health Insurance Benefits is directed to provide "assessments of proposed and existing mandated benefits and providers and other studies of mandated benefits and provider issues as requested by the General Assembly" and to provide "additional information and recommendations, relating to any system of mandated health insurance benefits and providers, to the Governor and the General Assembly upon request"; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Special Advisory Commission on Mandated Health Insurance Benefits examine and encourage continuing education of third party payers regarding adequate reimbursement for behavioral evaluations and ADHD and study the feasibility and appropriateness of expanding reimbursement for child evaluations to address an appropriate range of mental health services, including comprehensive assessment by clinical psychologists. In conducting the study, the Commission shall seek the input and expertise of child health and psychology professionals and shall address, among other things, the feasibility of providing reimbursements for child evaluative services without tying such reimbursement to a specific, final diagnosis.

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

The Commission shall complete its work by November 30, 2002, and submit its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the 2003 Session of the General Assembly as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents.

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