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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 261

Offered January 18, 2002

Encouraging the Board of Medicine and physicians across the Commonwealth to communicate effectively with their patients about the nature of the Alpha-fetaprotein test and Multiple Marker Screens so as to reduce anxiety among expectant parents and provide them with an accurate understanding of the risks of fetal abnormality.

Patrons—Saxman, Amundson, Athey, Barlow, Baskerville, Black, Bland, Carrico, Christian, Councill, Cox, Crittenden, Darner, Devolites, Hall, Hull, Janis, Johnson, Jones, D.C., Keister, Lingamfelter, Louderback, Marshall, R.G., McDonnell, Miles, Moran, Morgan, O'Brien, Oder, Petersen, Phillips, Rapp, Reid, Scott, Stump, Van Yahres and Watts; Senator: Hanger

Referred to Committee on Health, Welfare and Institutions

WHEREAS, the Alpha-fetoprotein test (AFP) and Multiple Marker Screens (MMS) are not diagnostic tests for Downs Syndrome or any other birth defect; and

WHEREAS, the vast majority of pregnant women whose AFP and MMS results necessitate further testing are carrying healthy babies; and

WHEREAS, effective communication is an essential part of the physician-patient relationship; and

WHEREAS, the failure of physicians to communicate the true nature of this initial screening can result in undue worry and anxiety on the part of pregnant women and their families; and

WHEREAS, individual physicians need to understand the need to be sensitive to the natural anxiety of expectant parents and their strong desire to bear healthy children and, as such, must undertake to ensure that these patients are fully aware of the nature of these tests and significance of their results before the results are communicated to them; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Board of Medicine and physicians across the Commonwealth communicate effectively with their patients about the nature of the Alpha-fetaprotein test and Multiple Marker Screens so as to reduce anxiety among expectant parents and provide them with an accurate understanding of the risks of fetal abnormality; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates shall transmit copies of this resolution to the Board of Medicine, requesting that they further disseminate copies of this resolution to their respective practitioners and professional organizations so that they may be apprised of the sense of the Virginia General Assembly in this matter.

INTRODUCED

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