

## 2002 SESSION

ENROLLED

### SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 108

*Directing the Joint Commission on Behavioral Health Care, or its successor in interest, in cooperation with the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services and the Virginia Department of Health, to develop a plan and strategy for suicide prevention in the Commonwealth.*

Agreed to by the Senate, March 6, 2002  
Agreed to by the House of Delegates, March 5, 2002

WHEREAS, the General Assembly of 1999 directed the Virginia Department of Health and the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services to study the magnitude of the problem of deaths by suicide in the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, that study, reported to the General Assembly of 2000, resulted in the formation of a task force by both departments and a Youth Suicide Prevention Plan developed by the Commission on Youth; and

WHEREAS, that plan was partially funded by the 2000 General Assembly; and

WHEREAS, a subsequent study by the Virginia Department of Health found that from 1996 through 1998, 2,387 Virginians died by suicide and 13,992 Virginians were treated for self-inflicted injuries; and

WHEREAS, more than 179 of those deaths by suicide occurred among youth or people under age 20 and 2,208 suicides were completed by adults; and

WHEREAS, during the same years, 1,404 Virginians died by homicide and 5,594 were treated as a result of assault; and

WHEREAS, in July 1999 the United States Surgeon General released a Call to Action for Suicide Prevention followed by the National Suicide Prevention Strategy in May 2001; and

WHEREAS, Virginia is recognized as a leader in the fight to prevent youth suicide, and federal grants may be made available to Virginia and other states with approved suicide prevention plans; and

WHEREAS, the Youth Suicide Prevention Plan can be expanded to address the serious public health problem of suicide across the human life span and to develop a strategy for implementing these plans as recommended by the United States Surgeon General; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the Joint Commission on Behavioral Health Care, or its successor in interest, in cooperation with the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services and the Virginia Department of Health, be directed to develop a plan and strategy for suicide prevention in the Commonwealth.

The Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services and the Virginia Department of Health shall also provide technical assistance for the study. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the entity directed to conduct this study, upon request.

The Joint Commission on Behavioral Health Care, or its successor in interest, shall complete its work by November 30, 2002, and shall submit its written 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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