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HOUSE BILL NO. 882

Offered January 9, 2002

Prefiled January 9, 2002

A BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding a section numbered 32.1-11.5, relating to the establishment of a bioterrorism unit within the Virginia Department of Health.

Patrons—Phillips, Armstrong, Bland, Christian, Crittenden, Darner, Hull, Jones, D.C., Miles, Scott, Shuler, Van Yahres and Watts

Referred to Committee on Health, Welfare and Institutions

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding a section numbered 32.1-11.5 as follows:**

§ 32.1-11.5. Response to bioterrorism.

A. Pursuant to and consistent with the Board of Health's responsibilities for safeguarding environmental health, reporting and prevention of diseases and disorders, including those disorders caused by toxins, the Board shall reorganize or create a structure within the present organization of the Department of Health to prevent, manage, and respond to any critical event or emergency resulting from bioterrorism.

B. The Department of Health's bioterrorism unit shall:

- 1. Monitor the disease reporting requirements of the Board pursuant to § 32.1-35;*
- 2. Advise the Board on any known emerging risks from pathogens or toxins;*
- 3. Cooperate and coordinate the response to any epidemic of disease caused by or appearing to be caused by bioterrorism with state and local law enforcement and emergency management officials;*
- 4. Conduct contact tracing and surveillance of disease incidence;*
- 5. Develop a mechanism for immediately advising the Governor of any sudden unexpected incident of a disease that has been believed to be under control or eliminated; and*
- 6. Implement a health plan for emergency response to unexpected health hazards that designates the role of the Commonwealth's hospitals, nursing homes, emergency medical services, and health care practitioners.*

2. That the Board of Health shall promulgate regulations to implement the provisions of this act to be effective within 280 days of its enactment.

INTRODUCED

HB882