

2003 SESSION

ENROLLED

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 312

Requesting the Secretary of Health and Human Resources, in cooperation with the Secretaries of Education and Public Safety, to formulate a comprehensive Suicide Prevention Across the Life Span Plan for the Commonwealth. Report.

Agreed to by the Senate, February 4, 2003

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 13, 2003

WHEREAS, suicide is the second leading cause of death for people aged 10-35 in the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, over the last 14 years, attention in the Commonwealth has focused on suicide prevention among the elderly and youth; and

WHEREAS, at the national level, the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention, published in 2001, has prompted a number of states to develop plans for suicide prevention across the life span, from youth to old age; and

WHEREAS, to implement more extensive youth suicide prevention activities and begin initiatives across the life span, the Virginia Department of Health applied in 2002 to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and was awarded \$967,000 over three years to expand the Commonwealth's suicide prevention efforts; and

WHEREAS, while some suicide prevention activities in the Commonwealth are directed primarily at youth and the elderly, there is no overall suicide prevention strategy across the life span and no single agency acts as a clearinghouse or coordinator of activities related to suicide prevention; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the Secretary of Health and Human Resources, in cooperation with the Secretaries of Education and Public Safety, be requested to formulate a comprehensive Suicide Prevention Across the Life Span Plan for the Commonwealth. Agencies that shall participate in this effort include the Departments of Health; Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services; Social Services; Education; Juvenile Justice; Criminal Justice Services; State Police; Corrections; the Department for the Aging, and any other state agency that has a specific interest, responsibility, or role in the development of the plan. The Department of Health and the Department for the Aging shall be the agencies responsible for actually developing the plan, supporting the Secretary's efforts. All affected stakeholders shall be involved in the development of this plan. The plan shall address suicide prevention across the life span with a special emphasis on effective strategies to prevent suicide among adolescent and elderly Virginians and all other identified high-risk populations. In developing the plan, previous planning efforts in Virginia and in other states, as well as the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention, shall be reviewed and applicable recommendations, goals, objectives, and strategies shall be integrated into this new comprehensive plan. The plan shall establish the Commonwealth's public policy regarding the prevention of suicide, identify the lead agency responsible for carrying out that policy, propose initiatives and interventions to effectively implement that policy, and identify the sources and amounts of resources to implement those initiatives and interventions. Finally, the plan shall propose the creation of a permanent oversight body to monitor the implementation of the plan.

The Secretary of Health and Human Resources shall submit to the Division of Legislative Automated Systems an executive summary and report of its progress in meeting the request of this resolution no later than the first day of the 2005 Regular Session of the General Assembly. The executive summary and report shall be submitted as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents and reports and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.

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