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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 325

Offered January 8, 2003

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Requesting the Joint Commission on Health Care to study the problems affecting the provision of long-term care services to Virginia citizens. Report.

Patrons—Martin; Delegate: Rapp

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, the demand for nursing facility services will increase dramatically in the future with 60 percent of those who turn 75 needing long-term care sometime in their life; and

WHEREAS, 46 percent of those who enter a nursing facility will deplete their life savings in 3 months or less and will need assistance from the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, Virginia Medicaid currently pays only about 85 percent of the allowable costs incurred to provide care for a nursing facility patient; and

WHEREAS, in 2001, nursing facilities in Virginia lost more than \$80 million in caring for Medicaid patients and this loss has been partially passed to the private pay patient who, in order to meet this shortfall, would have to pay an extra \$42 per day or \$15,000 per year, which amounts to a hidden tax on those persons already bearing the financial responsibility for their care; and

WHEREAS, nursing facility reimbursement, as a percentage of the Medicaid budget, has declined steadily over the past 15 years and is below the rates paid in 3 surrounding states; and

WHEREAS, the 2002 General Assembly imposed a \$25 million cut in Medicaid payment rates to nursing facilities; and

WHEREAS, to remain licensed, nursing facilities must meet national survey and certification standards enforced by the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services; and

WHEREAS, nursing salaries and professional liability costs continue to increase at rates much higher than general inflation; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the Joint Commission on Health Care be requested to study the problems affecting the provision of long-term care services to Virginia citizens.

In conducting its study, the Joint Commission on Health Care, through the work of its standing Long Term Care Subcommittee, shall, among other issues considered pertinent to the study, examine the scope of the problems affecting the provision of long-term care services and (i) suggest incentives for the purchase of long-term care insurance, (ii) develop strategies to reduce the incidence of lawsuits and resulting settlements against long-term care facilities that ultimately are borne by the state, (iii) develop strategies to increase the supply of nurse caregivers, and (iv) provide adequate Medicaid reimbursement.

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

The Joint Commission on Health Care shall be limited to 4 meetings for this study during the 2003 interim, and the direct costs of this study shall not exceed \$16,000 without approval as set out in this resolution.

The Joint Commission on Health Care shall complete its meetings by November 30, 2003, and the Chairman shall submit to the Division of Legislative Automated Systems an executive summary of its findings and recommendations no later than the first day of the 2004 Regular Session of the General Assembly. The executive summary shall state whether the Joint Commission on Health Care intends to submit to the Governor and the General Assembly a report of its findings and recommendations (for publication as a document). 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.

Implementation of this resolution is subject to subsequent approval and certification by the Joint Rules Committee. The Committee may approve or disapprove expenditures for this study, extend or delay the period for the conduct of the study, or authorize additional meetings during the 2003 interim.

INTRODUCED

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