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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 320

Offered January 12, 2005

Prefiled January 11, 2005

Designating February, in 2005 and in each succeeding year, as Children's Dental Health Month in Virginia.

 Patron—Marsh

 Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, "Oral Health in America," the report of the U.S. Surgeon General in 2000, stated that tooth decay is one of the most common chronic childhood diseases, and children living in poverty suffer twice as much tooth decay as their more affluent peers, and their disease is more likely to be untreated; and

WHEREAS, the American Academy of Periodontology reported that "much of the time, oral problems are avoidable, and that common dental problems seen in children are cavities and gingivitis, and when these problems are not treated early, more severe problems develop and cause unnecessary suffering"; and

WHEREAS, national data pertaining to the oral health care needs of children indicate that one in five Medicaid eligible children received preventive dental services in 1993, 23 million children are without dental insurance coverage, uninsured children are 2.5 times less likely than insured children to receive dental care, more than 51 million school hours are lost each year to dental-related illness, and 34 percent of schools identify or refer for dental problems; and

WHEREAS, according to the Surgeon General's report, about 37 percent of children have not had a dental visit before starting school, preventing early detection of avoidable dental problems and causing dental professionals to miss an opportunity to teach and promote good oral health habits to children and their parents; and

WHEREAS, 63 years ago, the annual observance of children's dental health began as a one-day event in Cleveland, Ohio, on February 3, 1941, and the first national observance of Children's Dental Health Day, held by the American Dental Association on February 8, 1949, resulted in a week-long event in 1955 and was extended to a month-long celebration in 1981, known today as "National Children's Dental Health Month"; and

WHEREAS, since 1941, the message about the oral health needs of children and the promotion of good oral health habits has reached millions of people in communities across the country and even armed service bases abroad through local observances, coloring and essay contests for children, health fairs, free dental screenings, museum exhibits, classroom presentations, and dental office tours; and

WHEREAS, oral health care is a part of good health care, and recognizing and caring for the oral health needs of children raises public awareness of the importance of oral health to total health; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly designate February, in 2005 and in each succeeding year, as Children's Dental Health Month in Virginia; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate transmit a copy of this resolution to the Secretary of Health and Human Resources, the dean of the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Dentistry, the Executive Director of the Virginia Dental Association, the President of the Old Dominion Dental Society, the President of the Virginia Dental Hygienists Association, the President of the Virginia Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, and the President and Executive Director of the Board of Dentistry, requesting that they further disseminate copies of this resolution to their respective constituents, so that they may be apprised of the sense of the General Assembly of Virginia in this matter; and, be it

RESOLVED FINALLY, That the Clerk of the Senate post the designation of this month on the General Assembly's website.

INTRODUCED

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