

2007 SESSION

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HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 60

Offered February 15, 2007

Commending the Joint Commission on Health Care on its study of autism and its efforts to recommend a state agency to be designated as the lead agency on autism services for the Commonwealth.

Patrons—Shannon and Nutter

WHEREAS, autism spectrum disorders are a cluster of developmental disabilities, significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication, social interaction, and activities of daily living that persist lifelong; and

WHEREAS, autism spectrum disorders represent a wide variety of intellectual and cognitive abilities that are complex in nature, and there currently exists no locus of planning and service delivery for this population in the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, persons with autism spectrum disorders frequently require intensive services and support from trained professionals in all aspects of learning, working, and daily life in order to become independent and productive members of society; and

WHEREAS, fifty percent of direct service providers felt unqualified to serve persons with autism spectrum disorders in a survey conducted under House Joint Resolution No. 228 in 2000; and

WHEREAS, the prevalence of autism spectrum disorders has increased significantly from four to five in 10,000 births in 1980 to a current prevalence of one in 166 births according to the National Centers for Disease Control, and the Commonwealth has recorded an equivalent increase in persons diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders; and

WHEREAS, services for this population in the Commonwealth are highly fragmented, and people with autism spectrum disorders do not have an agency that provides leadership in the areas of policy, planning, and service coordination in order to identify current and future needs and ensure that those needs can be met throughout the lifespan; and

WHEREAS, in its 2007 work plan, the Joint Commission on Health Care has agreed to study and recommend a primary agency for developing, coordinating, and overseeing autism services; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, That the Joint Commission on Health Care hereby be commended for its study of autism and its efforts to recommend a state agency to be designated as the lead agency on autism services for the Commonwealth; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the Joint Commission on Health Care as recognition of the agency's work on the issue of autism services and the importance of addressing the needs of persons with autism spectrum disorders.

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