

083150760

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 105

Offered January 9, 2008

Prefiled January 8, 2008

Requesting the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services to study autism services in the Commonwealth. Report.

Patrons—Valentine, Englin, Amundson, Armstrong, BaCote, Brink, Caputo, Ebbin, Marsden, Mathieson, McClellan, Miller, P.J., Morrissey, Poisson, Shannon, Sickles, Toscano and Watts

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) are a group of developmental disabilities defined by significant impairments in social interaction and communication, and the presence of unusual stereotypical or repetitive behaviors, interests, and activities that often appear before the age of three and affect all racial, ethnic and socioeconomic groups; and

WHEREAS, many people with ASDs also have unusual ways of learning, paying attention, or reacting to different situations and sensations and the thinking and learning abilities of people with ASDs can vary significantly; and

WHEREAS, the Center for Disease Control's Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring Network reports that the rate of autism among the population has grown by 173% over the past decade, and that in 2007 one in every 150 eight-year-old children had a diagnosed ASD; and

WHEREAS, between 1998 and 2006, the number of children aged three to 22 with an identified ASD enrolled in the Virginia Public School System increased by more than 400 percent from 1,521 to 6,753; and

WHEREAS, the need for uniform, consistent, effective, and appropriate approaches to the diagnosis, treatment, and management of ASDs has grown apace with the prevalence of ASDs; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services be requested to study autism services in the Commonwealth.

In conducting its study, the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services shall work together with the Department of Education, Department of Health, Department of Health Professions, Department of Medical Assistance Services, Virginia Board for People with Disabilities, Department of Rehabilitative Services, and other interested stakeholders including Commonwealth Autism Services, Virginia Institute for Autism, Autism Treatment Network, Autism Society of America, Autism Coalition for Treatment, the Center for Autism and Related Disorders, the Autism Research Institute, clinicians in private practice, parents of children affected by autism, and others to identify and evaluate best practices in the provision of services for the diagnosis, treatment and management of autism; methods of providing services to persons with autism; and to identify ways to disseminate information regarding best practices to persons in the educational, medical, rehabilitative, legal, judicial, law enforcement and emergency services, mental health services, and other service areas. Such evaluation shall include evaluation of medical, physical and occupational therapies; speech therapy; applied behavioral analysis; biomedical treatments; dietary therapies; and environmental factors affecting autism; and consideration of information emerging from clinical trials, and current and ongoing medical and other research. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services for this study, upon request.

The Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services shall complete its meetings for the first year by November 30, 2008, and for the second year by November 30, 2009, and the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services shall submit to the Governor and the General Assembly an executive summary and report of its findings and recommendations for publication as a House or Senate document for each year. The executive summaries and reports shall be submitted as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents and reports no later than the first day of the next Regular Session of the General Assembly and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website. Idtitle>

INTRODUCED

HJ105