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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 174

Offered January 9, 2008

Prefiled January 9, 2008

Directing the Joint Commission on Health Care to study considering competence of licensed health care professionals as a condition of license renewal. Report.

Patron—Hall

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, the Virginia Board of Health Professions and its 13 health regulatory boards are charged with the development of standards to evaluate the competency of the professions and occupations represented; and

WHEREAS, rapid advances in technology and medical science are revolutionizing health care, making it increasingly important for practitioners to meet their professional responsibility to stay abreast of current developments in the field; and

WHEREAS, the public demands greater accountability for quality outcomes and believes that as a condition of retaining their licenses, health care practitioners should be required to demonstrate that they possess the current knowledge and skills necessary to provide quality health care; and

WHEREAS, all health professionals agree that continued competence is an important component of safe practice and good outcomes; and

WHEREAS, in an effort to advance quality of care, all 24 medical specialties represented by the American Board of Medical Specialties now require their board-certified physicians to demonstrate ongoing competency in medical knowledge, patient care, practice-based learning and improvement, interpersonal and communication skills, professionalism, and systems-based practice; and

WHEREAS, the Federation of State Medical Boards recommends that state medical boards require physicians seeking license renewal to demonstrate competence in the area of practice in which they engage on a daily basis; and

WHEREAS, other health professions are looking at ways to determine continued competence, including several nursing organizations; and

WHEREAS, health care providers should not be subjected to duplicative requirements or unnecessary direct or indirect costs and regulatory boards should neither impose these duplicative requirements nor incur their own unnecessary costs; and

WHEREAS, there are accepted existing alternatives to continuing competency and precedent for granting deemed status to those who meet these competency requirements; and

WHEREAS, Virginia's health regulatory boards currently rely primarily on the completion of continuing education courses as evidence of continued competency; and

WHEREAS, numerous studies have determined that continuing education may not be the best way to measure continued competence; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Attorney General's Regulatory Reform Commission is conducting a study to determine the costs of continuing education, and it appears that such costs may amount to well over a million dollars a year for physicians alone; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Joint Commission on Health Care be directed to study considering competence of licensed health care professionals as a condition of license renewal. In its deliberations, the Commission shall determine and consider how each of Virginia's 13 health regulatory boards currently measures the competence of practitioners subject to relicensure, and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of various methods by which current competence might be demonstrated and measured. The Commission shall also consider existing proposals or pending proposals by health care professional organizations and others who have considered or made recommendations on the issue of continued competence of health care professionals. Finally, the Commission shall develop recommendations regarding any changes that may be necessary to ensure that health care professionals licensed in Virginia are competent at the time of relicensure.

Technical assistance shall be provided to the Joint Commission on Health Care by the Department of Health Professions and its regulatory boards. 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 complete its meetings for the first year by November 30, 2008, and for the second year by November 30, 2009, 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 next Regular Session of the General Assembly for each year. Each executive

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59 summary shall state whether the Joint Commission on Health Care intends to submit to the General
60 Assembly and the Governor a report of its findings and recommendations for publication as a House or
61 Senate document. The executive summaries and reports shall be submitted as provided in the procedures
62 of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents and
63 reports and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.