

2008 SESSION

ENROLLED

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 102

Directing the Joint Commission on Health Care to study support services for family caregivers of the frail elderly and disabled and community-based caregiver support organizations. Report.

Agreed to by the Senate, March 6, 2008

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, March 5, 2008

WHEREAS, a number of studies have established that frail elderly and disabled individuals desire to live in their homes rather than in an institutional setting; and

WHEREAS, the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission's 2005 report, "Impact of An Aging Population on State Agencies," found that "informal caregivers, such as family and friends, provide the majority of care to older people who need assistance" and that "the assistance provided by informal caregivers often allows individuals to remain in their homes and communities by preventing or delaying the need for institutional care"; and

WHEREAS, there are currently an estimated 700,000 informal caregivers in Virginia providing 793 million caregiving hours per year; and

WHEREAS, many informal caregivers work and must balance work and caregiving, thereby needing the help of community-based services; and

WHEREAS, the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission's 2005 report indicated that many communities in the Commonwealth lacked sufficient community-based services; and

WHEREAS, family caregivers must take care of themselves in order to provide the care needed for their loved ones; respite care for them is a much needed service; and

WHEREAS, the Governor's Commission on Health Care Reform in its report recognized the need for support of family caregivers and community-based caregiver organizations and recommended a study be done that would assist the Secretary of Health and Human Resources and legislators in identifying policies, resources, and funding to enrich these resources and ensure an adequacy of services as long-term care demands increase; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the Joint Commission on Health Care be directed to study support services for family caregivers of the frail elderly and disabled and community-based caregiver support organizations.

In conducting its study, the Joint Commission on Health Care shall consider (i) family caregiving needs and programs of direct assistance such as information, education, and respite care; (ii) community-based caregiver programs currently available in the Commonwealth that support family caregivers and long-term care consumers; (iii) what services exist in other states to support family caregivers and community-based caregiver organizations; (iv) expansion and/or alternatives to current programs in Virginia that would better support community-based care and family caregivers; and (v) the development of recommendations for providing adequate access and support for family caregivers and community-based care services.

Technical assistance shall be provided to the Joint Commission on Health Care by the Department for the Aging, Virginia Department of Health, Department of Medical Assistance Services, Department of Social Services, and Department of Rehabilitation Services. 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 study by November 1, 2008, 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 2009 Regular Session of the General Assembly. The executive summary shall state whether the Commission intends to submit to the General Assembly and the Governor a report of its findings and recommendations for publication as a House or Senate 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.

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