

2009 SESSION

ENROLLED

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 823

Recognizing the importance of the Adolescent Well Health visit.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 6, 2009

Agreed to by the Senate, February 24, 2009

WHEREAS, during the transition from childhood to adulthood, adolescents may establish unhealthy patterns of behavior and make poor lifestyle choices that affect both their current and future health; and

WHEREAS, many adolescents may not have access to primary health care. In Virginia roughly half of all adolescents have not had a preventative health care visit in the past 12 months and one out of 10 lacks health insurance coverage; and

WHEREAS, adolescents and young adults are adversely affected by serious health and safety issues such as motor vehicle crashes, violence, and substance abuse. In Virginia, over 11,000 young adults were injured in motor vehicle crashes in 2007. One out of 10 hospitalizations and seven out of 10 deaths among Virginia youth in 2006 were injury related. Nearly one-third of adolescents surveyed in Virginia in 2005 reported using alcohol in the past 30 days; and

WHEREAS, adolescents and young people also struggle to adopt healthy behaviors such as eating nutritiously, engaging in physical activity, and choosing not to use tobacco, which could decrease their risk of developing chronic diseases in adulthood. Three out of 10 Virginia youth are overweight or at risk of becoming overweight. More than 15 percent of high school students still smoke regularly. Environmental factors such as family, peer group, school, and community characteristics also contribute to the challenges faced by adolescents; and

WHEREAS, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the American Academy of Family Physicians, and the American Medical Association recommend routine health care visits for adolescents aged 11 to 12 to receive recommended immunizations and other evidence-based preventative health care services; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Health Resources and Services Administration has developed, in conjunction with AAP, the Bright Futures Initiative, which provides a set of guidelines including recommendations on immunizations and routine health screenings for adolescents; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Departments of Health; Medical Assistance Services; Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services; and Social Services have adopted Bright Futures as the standard of well child care; and

WHEREAS, the National Association of County and City Health Officials supports the development of an adolescent health care platform that would address unmet prevention needs among adolescents, including health care screenings and testing, age-appropriate immunizations, injury prevention, obesity prevention, and mental health screenings; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Department of Health promotes and follows the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices recommendations on federal Food and Drug Administration approved vaccines for tetanus, meningitis, influenza, and other illnesses in adolescents; and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has launched a national campaign to raise awareness about adolescent health and immunizations; and

WHEREAS, the Society for Adolescent Medicine has found that adolescent well visits are one of the best tools of preventative care to ensure continued health from childhood to adulthood, and that children and adolescents who regularly visit a primary care physician are less likely to have emergency room visits and preventable hospitalizations; and

WHEREAS, because adolescents remain under the guardianship of their parents, parental awareness of the need for an adolescent well visit plays a crucial role in the incidence of adolescent well visits; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the importance of the Adolescent Well Health visit be recognized, and that state legislators seek to improve adolescent health and wellness by recognizing the importance of an adolescent well physical to prevent chronic diseases, help parents and health care providers better identify and treat chronic disease, and make decisions on updating immunizations; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution to be sent to the Secretary of Health and Human Resources to disseminate to state agencies and stakeholder organizations that can assist with the promotion of adolescent well health.

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