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## HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 87

Offered January 11, 2012

Prefiled January 10, 2012

*Requesting the State Health Commissioner to promote and emphasize prostate cancer screening as an effective tool in prostate cancer prevention. Report.*

Patrons—McQuinn, BaCote, Carr and Tyler

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, prostate cancer, the uncontrolled growth of abnormal cells in the small gland in the male reproductive system that assists in making the fluid that protects and nourishes sperm cells in semen, is the most common non-skin cancer in America, affecting one in six men; and

WHEREAS, according to the Prostate Cancer Foundation, it is estimated that in 2011 more than 240,000 men will be diagnosed with the disease, more than 33,000 men will die from the disease, and more than two million American men will be living with prostate cancer; and

WHEREAS, groups most at risk of prostate cancer include African American men, men age 50 and older, men with a family history of prostate cancer, and men with female relatives with the BRCA breast cancer gene; men whose diet is high in animal fat or low in vegetables are also at greater risk of developing prostate cancer; and

WHEREAS, the presence of the disease may be indicated by symptoms, physical examination, biopsy, and the prostate-specific antigen test known as PSA; and

WHEREAS, the recent recommendation by the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force of the U.S. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality that healthy men should no longer undergo regular PSA screening for prostate cancer because screening does not save lives, could cause more harm than good, and could lead to unnecessary tests, needless surgery, overtreatment, incontinence, erectile dysfunction, and impotence has sparked considerable debate and controversy; and

WHEREAS, notwithstanding the disadvantages of prostate cancer screening, early detection of prostate cancer through PSA screening helps to save the lives of thousands of men each year, particularly African American men who are at a higher risk for the cancer and more likely to die from the disease; and

WHEREAS, "because approximately 90 percent of all prostate cancers are detected in the local and regional stages, the cure rate for prostate cancer is very high, and nearly 100 percent of men diagnosed at the early stage will be disease-free after five years," according to the Prostate Cancer Foundation; and

WHEREAS, prostate cancer has a variable pattern of growth; although a slow-growing cancer in most cases, there is a very aggressive form that without detection and treatment is quite deadly; and

WHEREAS, since the creation of the PSA blood test for prostate cancer screening in the early 1990s, many men have heeded the recommended regular PSA screening beginning at age 50, and early detection of cancer is key to successful treatment and survival; and

WHEREAS, the new guidelines, which call into question the benefit of regular prostate screening, have generated tremendous controversy and confusion among health professionals and the public, as well as fear among men and their families that the new guidelines to physicians, insurance companies, and policymakers will restrict access to PSA blood testing for prostate screening, an effective if not a perfect screening tool in prostate cancer prevention, and potentially compromise the health and lives of countless men, particularly those at high risk for the disease; and

WHEREAS, a consistent message on the necessity of physician-patient communication, regular physical examinations, men's health, and the benefits of early detection through prostate cancer screening would help dispel misinformation and fear, as well as encourage many men to take a proactive stance regarding their health, and the State Health Commissioner should address this important health care issue to protect the health and well-being of thousands of men in the Commonwealth; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the State Health Commissioner be requested to promote and emphasize prostate cancer screening as an effective tool in prostate cancer prevention.

The State Health Commissioner shall submit to the Division of Legislative Automated Systems an executive summary and report of his progress in meeting the request of this resolution no later than the first day of the 2013 Regular Session of the General Assembly. The executive summary and report shall be submitted for publication as a report document 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.

INTRODUCED

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