

2014 SESSION

INTRODUCED

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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 148

Offered January 14, 2014

Recognizing the importance of good oral health.

Patron—Peace

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, oral health is a critical component of overall health, with poor oral health associated with diabetes, low birth weight, and pre-term birth as well as affecting speech, nutrition, growth and function, social development, employability and productivity, and quality of life; and

WHEREAS, dental decay is the most common chronic disease among children in the Commonwealth; it is four times more common than asthma and four times more common than early childhood obesity, despite the fact that it is almost entirely preventable; and

WHEREAS, pregnant women with gum disease may be up to eight times more likely to deliver prematurely if gum disease is not managed; and

WHEREAS, preventable dental conditions are frequently cited as the number one reason uninsured adults visit the emergency department; and

WHEREAS, students miss more than 51 million hours of school and employed adults lose more than 164 million hours of work each year due to dental disease or dental visits; and

WHEREAS, dental decay is one of the most prevalent health problems in the Commonwealth, with almost half of all children having experienced dental decay by the third grade; and

WHEREAS, access to oral health services is associated with higher utilization of preventive and restorative dental services; and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth has improved access to Smiles for Children, Virginia's dental program for children enrolled in Medicaid, from 24 percent of children in 2005 to 53 percent in 2013; all Virginians deserve access to high-quality oral health care, and more can be done for low-income children who suffer more tooth decay than their higher-income peers; and

WHEREAS, good oral health is critical to good overall health, and it is important to support health policies at state and local levels that consistently promote oral health as part of an individual's overall health; support access to oral health services in the development of state health policy; support the use of available local, state, and federal resources to monitor oral health status; and support community oral health initiatives aimed at improving oral health literacy and better health outcomes; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly recognize the importance of good oral health; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates transmit a copy of this resolution to the Virginia Oral Health Coalition in order that the members of the coalition may be apprised of the sense of the General Assembly of Virginia in this matter during their deliberations.

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