

15101448D

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 240

Offered January 14, 2015

Prefiled January 10, 2015

Directing the Joint Commission on Health Care to study older Virginians' access to oral health care. Report.

Patron—Favola

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, good dental care and regular access to dentists is critical for overall health and well-being; and

WHEREAS, access to dental care is one of the greatest challenges facing older adults, especially those with low incomes and without dental insurance; and

WHEREAS, according to the Virginia Health Care Foundation, an estimated 3.8 million Virginians do not have dental insurance and Virginia is one of 16 states that offer only emergency dental coverage under Medicaid; and

WHEREAS, studies have found that gum disease, dental cavities, and missing teeth are as accurate at predicting cardiovascular disease as elevated cholesterol levels; and

WHEREAS, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 14.6 percent of the Virginia population over the age of 65 have lost all their teeth and 40.2 percent have lost six teeth or more; and

WHEREAS, preventative dental care could forestall serious dental and other health problems that would affect the lives of older Virginians at significant cost to the Commonwealth; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the Joint Commission on Health Care be directed to study older Virginians' access to oral health care.

In conducting its study, the Joint Commission on Health Care shall consider and make recommendations regarding (i) enhancing efforts to educate Virginians, especially older adults, about oral health, including the connection between oral health and heart health; (ii) improving the availability of routine and preventive dental procedures for older adults in long-term care settings; (iii) expanding free and low-cost community dental clinic opportunities for older adults; (iv) providing dental services for adult Medicaid beneficiaries; and (v) identifying funding sources and service options to address the gaps that older Virginians face in accessing dental care.

Technical assistance shall be provided to the Joint Commission on Health Care by the Department of Health and the Department of Medical Assistance 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 meetings by November 30, 2015, 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 2016 Regular Session of the General Assembly. The executive summary shall state whether the Joint Commission on Health Care 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.

INTRODUCED

SJ240