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## SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 257

Offered January 11, 2017

Prefiled January 3, 2017

*Directing the Joint Commission on Health Care to study options for increasing the use of telemental health services in the Commonwealth. Report.*

Patrons—Hanger and Deeds; Delegates: Kory and Toscano

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, telemental health is the use of electronic information and telecommunications technologies to support the delivery of behavioral health services, including clinical care, patient and professional health-related education, public health, and administration, at a distance by a variety of mental health service providers, including psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, psychiatric nurse practitioners, licensed professional counselors, and licensed marriage and family therapists; and

WHEREAS, telemental health provides an opportunity to enhance access to and the provision of mental health services in the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, telemental health models of care have demonstrated positive outcomes making telemental health a viable and essential tool for bridging the existing care gap; and

WHEREAS, during 2016, expert advisory panels on system structure and financing and mental health crisis response and emergency services established by the Joint Subcommittee Studying Mental Health Services in the Commonwealth in the 21st Century jointly established a Telemental Health Work Group to develop policy proposals to remove impediments to greater use of telemental health services; and

WHEREAS, in October 2016 the Telemental Health Work Group reported on 30 policy options to address six specific barriers to greater use of telemental health services and provided 12 specific recommendations for immediate consideration; and

WHEREAS, the Joint Subcommittee Studying Mental Health Services in the Commonwealth in the 21st Century finds that additional analysis and evaluation of policy options, implementation strategies, and budget and administration requirements is needed, as noted by the Telemental Health Work Group; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the Joint Commission on Health Care be directed to study options for increasing the use of telemental health services in the Commonwealth. The Joint Commission on Health Care shall specifically study the issues and recommendations set forth in the report of the Telemental Health Work Group of the Joint Subcommittee Studying Mental Health Services in the Commonwealth in the 21st Century.

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 and report its findings to the Joint Subcommittee Studying Mental Health Services in the Commonwealth in the 21st Century by November 1, 2017. 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 2018 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

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