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HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 62

Offered February 8, 2018

Commending the Virginia Beach Emergency Response System: Emergency Communications, Fire, EMS, and Police departments.

Patrons—Miyares, Convirs-Fowler and Turpin

WHEREAS, the Virginia Beach Emergency Response System: Emergency Communications, Fire, EMS, and Police departments has ably responded to the nationwide opioid crisis, working tirelessly to ensure the health and safety of Virginia Beach residents by promoting drug prevention and treatment programs and providing direct assistance to people suffering from a drug overdose; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Department of Health has declared that high rates of opioid addiction and overdoses constitute a public health emergency in the Commonwealth; each day, on average, more than two dozen Virginians are treated for a drug overdose, three of whom die, with more Virginians now dying from drug overdoses than automobile accidents; and

WHEREAS, among cities, Virginia Beach ranks second in the Commonwealth for opioid-related fatalities, with one fatality due to a drug overdose every five days; in 2017 alone, the Virginia Beach 911 center received more than 500 requests for assistance related to people suffering from a drug overdose, and members of the Virginia Beach Emergency Response System listed drug overdose as an initial impression at a scene more than 1,838 times; and

WHEREAS, members of the Virginia Beach Emergency Response System, including law-enforcement officers, firefighters, and emergency medical units, all carry naloxone, which can be rapidly administered to counteract the effects of opioids in a patient's system; Virginia Beach first responders administered naloxone 274 times in 2017, more than one administration every two days; and

WHEREAS, timely intervention is critical, and even in cases where members of the Virginia Beach Emergency Response System have administered treatment to or resuscitated a person suffering from an overdose, the effects of long-term opioid use may cause severe damage to internal organs and body systems, leading to premature death at a later time; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Beach Emergency Response System participates in "REVIVE!," which is the Opioid Overdose and Naloxone Education program in the Commonwealth, which served more than 250 people between April 2016 and October 2017; more than 110 people have also found help through the "Opioid Prevention, Treatment & Recovery Program," which provides direct intervention and wraparound support; and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth ranks sixth in the nation with regard to public safety officers encountering fentanyl, a powerful, rapid-onset opioid that can be absorbed through the skin; the members of the Virginia Beach Emergency Response System have partnered with state and federal officials to ensure that all personnel have the training to identify a scene where fentanyl is present and to utilize personal protective equipment and proper protocols when working with patients in dangerous conditions; and

WHEREAS, drug overdoses are now the leading cause of death among Americans under the age of 50, and the Virginia Beach Emergency Response System is doing its part to address the nationwide opioid crisis at the local level; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, That the Virginia Beach Emergency Response System: Emergency Communications, Fire, EMS, and Police departments hereby be commended for its work to support families and individuals affected by the opioid crisis in Virginia Beach; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the Virginia Beach Emergency Response System: Emergency Communications, Fire, EMS, and Police departments as an expression of the House of Delegates' admiration for the departments' commitment to the health and safety of all members of the Virginia Beach community.

INTRODUCED

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