

2018 SESSION

INTRODUCED

18104369D

SENATE BILL NO. 801

Offered January 10, 2018

Requesting the Department of Corrections, in collaboration with the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, to study the provision of patient-centered behavioral health services in state correctional facilities. Report.

Patron—Favola

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, the prison population of state correctional facilities in the Commonwealth is nearly 30,000 and, according to some estimates, at least 15 percent of prisoners suffer from serious mental illness; and

WHEREAS, prisoners with serious mental illness, especially those not being treated, cause major behavioral problems in correctional facilities, are much more likely to spend time in solitary confinement, are much more likely than other prisoners to return to prison following release, and cost more than other prisoners; and

WHEREAS, ensuring that prisoners with serious mental illness receive necessary and appropriate treatment delivered with a focus on the patient will not only lead to better patient outcomes but will also lead to safer, less crowded, and less costly state correctional facilities; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the Department of Corrections, in collaboration with the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, be requested to study the provision of patient-centered behavioral health services in state correctional facilities.

In conducting its study, the Department of Corrections (the Department), in collaboration with the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, shall (i) consider strategies to ensure the organization, delivery, and funding of behavioral health services in state correctional facilities are patient centered and designed to enable prisoners to participate in an ongoing treatment plan; (ii) consider the impact of solitary confinement on an individual's mental health; (iii) recommend strategies to successfully transfer more prisoners from solitary confinement to the general population; (iv) recommend relevant changes to policies and procedures; and (v) consider other relevant issues as determined by the Department.

All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Department for this study, upon request.

The Department shall complete its meetings by November 30, 2018, and shall submit to the Governor and the General Assembly an executive summary and 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 no later than the first day of the 2019 Regular Session of the General Assembly and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.

INTRODUCED

SB801