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SENATE BILL NO. 1280

Offered January 9, 2019

Prefiled January 7, 2019

A *BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding in Article 4 of Chapter 3 of Title 32.1 a section numbered 32.1-92.3, relating to community health workers; certification.*

Patrons—Barker and Lewis

Referred to Committee on Education and Health

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding in Article 4 of Chapter 3 of Title 32.1 a section numbered 32.1-92.3 as follows:

§ 32.1-92.3. Community health workers; certification.

A. As used in this section:

"Certified community health worker" means a community health worker who has been certified by an entity approved by the Department in accordance with subsection C.

"Community health worker" means an individual who (i) applies his unique understanding of the experience, language, and culture of the populations he serves to promote healthy living and to help people take greater control over their health and lives and (ii) is trained to work in a variety of community settings, partnering in the delivery of health and human services to carry out one or more of the following roles: (a) providing culturally appropriate health education and information; (b) linking people to direct service providers, including informal counseling and social support; and (c) advocating for individual and community needs, including identification of gaps and existing strengths and actively building individual and community capacity.

B. No person shall use or assume the title "certified community health worker" unless he is certified by an entity approved by the Department in accordance with subsection C.

C. The Department shall approve one or more entities to certify community health workers in the Commonwealth. Any such entity shall be a member of the International Certification and Reciprocity Consortium and shall implement a certification process that is based on a standard scope of practice and core competencies aligned with national standards and that includes legacy provisions for the certification of community health workers who have achieved a minimum number of practice hours prior to a certain date determined by the Department.