

## 1995 SESSION

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### HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 454

*Requesting the Department of Health, in cooperation with the Medical Society of Virginia, to aggressively seek to reduce the incidence of osteoporosis among the citizens of the Commonwealth.*

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 4, 1995

Agreed to by the Senate, February 21, 1995

WHEREAS, 25 million Americans are stricken with osteoporosis, a preventable disorder which occurs most frequently among older people, causing loss of bone mass; and

WHEREAS, in a recent Virginia survey, three percent of responding women had been diagnosed with osteoporosis; and

WHEREAS, experts estimate that, in the United States, one in two women and one in five men will suffer a bone fracture because of osteoporosis; and

WHEREAS, nationally, osteoporosis results in 1.5 million fractures of the hip, spine, wrist, and other bones, with a cost of at least \$18 billion in health care and associated expenses; and

WHEREAS, osteoporosis is frequently a silent, undiagnosed disease, affecting apparently healthy individuals, which only becomes apparent when the individual suffers an unexpected broken bone often as a result of a trivial event, such as a hug or a hard sneeze; and

WHEREAS, osteoporosis, if allowed to progress undetected to the point of bone fracture, can and frequently does cause disability and institutionalization, thereby reducing the quality and the length of the individual's life and exacting a heavy toll in increased health costs; and

WHEREAS, although there is presently no cure for osteoporosis, medical experts agree that prevention, early diagnosis, and treatment can reduce the prevalence of this devastating disease; and

WHEREAS, many people, even medical experts, are not aware of the crucial need to educate people, particularly women, of the preventive steps, such as adequate calcium intake, continued exercise throughout life, and in the case of older women, estrogen replacement therapy under appropriate circumstances; and

WHEREAS, the safe and painless tests of bone mass measurement should be publicized among physicians and the public in order to reduce the costly effects of broken bones resulting from osteoporosis; and

WHEREAS, current expert thinking emphasizes the need to educate young people in this regard so that such young people will take the steps to build and preserve strong bones throughout their lives; and

WHEREAS, if the public can be made aware of the simple solutions to prevention of this devastating disease, osteoporosis is preventable and the costs of long-term care among older Americans will be reduced; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Department of Health, in cooperation with the Medical Society of Virginia, be requested to aggressively seek to reduce the incidence of osteoporosis among the citizens of the Commonwealth, particularly among older women. In implementing this request, the Department is asked to initiate, within available resources, an osteoporosis prevention and education program which will promote (i) public knowledge of osteoporosis, its causes and prevention, (ii) the value of early detection of this terrible disease, and (iii) the benefits and risks of available treatments.

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