

1995 SESSION

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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 548

Offered January 23, 1995

Requesting the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services in conjunction with the Virginia Association of Community Services Boards to study and make recommendations on the current delivery system for mental health services in the Commonwealth.

Patrons—Rhodes, Bloxom, Cunningham, DeBoer, Grayson, Howell, Morgan, Purkey, Putney and Scott;
Senators: Gartlan, Holland, R.J. and Robb

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, deinstitutionalization of mental health clients into the community has been an evolutionary process in the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, although recommended by a number of studies in the 1960s and early 1970s, the process of deinstitutionalization has never been totally coordinated and adequately funded; and

WHEREAS, removing a client from an institution, or preventing initial placement, for treatment in the community where the client in many cases can function well with adequate support services is the ideal; and

WHEREAS, although institutional stays have been shortened and new pharmaceutical products have allowed previously long-term clients to exit institutional care, hospitalization, either short- or long-term, will always be a part of the continuum of care for mental health clients; and

WHEREAS, recent years have seen downsizing of mental health facilities and cuts in treatment and support personnel as well as cuts in funds for services provided by the community services boards, and more cuts appear to be on the horizon; and

WHEREAS, the current methodology used to serve and fund client services has developed in an evolutionary manner and needs to be reviewed to determine its efficacy and accountability in meeting the needs of mental health clients in the Commonwealth, especially given the recent and pending cuts in staff and service funds; and

WHEREAS, the Joint Subcommittee Studying the Effects of Deinstitutionalization has determined that the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services in conjunction with the Virginia Association of Community Services Boards are the proper authorities to evaluate and make recommendations on the service and funding system in a manner to better serve our citizens who need mental health treatment; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services in conjunction with the Virginia Association of Community Services Boards evaluate the service delivery system and make recommendations as to how mental health services can be organized, delivered and funded in a more efficient and accountable manner to meet the needs of the citizens of the Commonwealth. In conducting this study, the Department and Association shall solicit the participation of other appropriate organizations as deemed necessary.

The Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services shall provide staff support for the study. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Department and Association, upon request.

The Department and Association shall complete their work in time to report all findings and recommendations to the Joint Subcommittee Studying the Effects of Deinstitutionalization prior to September 15, 1995 in order that sufficient time will be available for the Joint Subcommittee to review the recommendations for possible consideration in the biennial budget process.

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