

1995 SESSION

INTRODUCED

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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 549

Offered January 23, 1995

Requesting the continuation of the Joint Subcommittee to Study the Effects of Deinstitutionalization.

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, the Joint Subcommittee Studying the Effects of Deinstitutionalization pursuant to HJR 139 of 1994 was charged with examining the effects of deinstitutionalizing mental health clients into the community; and

WHEREAS, deinstitutionalization is not a novel effort but a proven method of care for persons with mental disabilities; and

WHEREAS, mental health services, by law, must be provided to those who need mental health care in an atmosphere that is most conducive to an optimal outcome and which employs the least restrictive alternatives; and

WHEREAS, hospitalization will always be a part of the continuum of services for the treatment of mental disabilities; and

WHEREAS, although the average stay in a state mental health facility is half of what it was in 1975, the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services projects an increase of 2.7 percent in total admissions to all facilities by the year 2000; and

WHEREAS, all previous studies of this issue have documented the need for increased funding for community services because it is the key component for the successful transition of a patient from institution to community or can be the critical factor in avoidance of institutionalization; and

WHEREAS, recent years have seen a steady demand for budget reductions by all state agencies totaling millions of dollars, and the Department, while already projecting a budget reduction of \$40 million in general funds for this biennium, now is faced with the prospect of an additional cut in personnel and a cut in funding of \$6 million to the Community Services Boards as well as a loss of funds in institutions; and

WHEREAS, the joint subcommittee agreed that there was insufficient time to thoroughly evaluate the consequences of such budget reductions on the provision of services to mental health clients and has requested a study of the methodology used to serve clients in the mental health system by the Department and the Virginia Association of Community Services Boards; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Joint Subcommittee Studying the Effects of Deinstitutionalization be continued for an additional year in order to continue its study and receive a report with recommendations from the Department and the VACSB.

The direct costs of this study shall not exceed \$ 4,650.

The Division of Legislative Services shall provide staff support for the study. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the joint subcommittee upon request.

The joint subcommittee shall complete its work in time to submit its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the 1996 Session of the General Assembly as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for processing legislative documents.

Implementation of this resolution is subject to subsequent approval and certification by the Joint Rules Committee. The committee may withhold expenditures or delay the period for the conduct of the study.

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