

1995 SESSION

ENROLLED

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 288

Requesting the Department of Health to join with the Medical Society of Virginia, the Virginia Pediatric Society, the health care community, all parents and grandparents of young children, and all citizens and businesses of the Commonwealth in aggressively seeking cooperative ways to prevent, identify, and treat lead poisoning among children.

Agreed to by the Senate, February 7, 1995

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 16, 1995

WHEREAS, throughout Virginia there are thousands of old houses, many of them very beautiful and gracious, but potentially dangerous to young children; and

WHEREAS, although lead-based paints were banned in the United States in 1978, most experts advise that houses built before 1980 are possible sources of lead exposure; and

WHEREAS, young children and developing fetuses are more at risk for lead poisoning than adults because they quickly metabolize ingested or inhaled lead; and

WHEREAS, among young children, lead poisoning presents grave danger because high blood-lead levels may result in mental retardation; and

WHEREAS, as noted in Senate Joint Resolution No. 142, the American Academy of Pediatrics has recommended a blood-lead testing schedule for young children; and

WHEREAS, within the medical community there is some controversy concerning the efficacy of and need for this rigorous testing schedule, and yet many experts emphasize the urgency of identifying and monitoring children with high blood-lead levels to prevent permanent damage; and

WHEREAS, establishing practice standards through law is not wise; however, there does appear to be a need for communication, coordination, and standardization of blood-lead level testing among health professionals in Virginia; and

WHEREAS, it also appears that many citizens, including parents of young children, are unaware of the dangers of lead-based paint and that private organizations with relevant purposes may be willing to assist in educating Virginia's people in this regard; and

WHEREAS, prevention, although frequently impossible to quantify, is always cheaper in terms of costs and human suffering; and

WHEREAS, the Joint Subcommittee Studying the Abatement of Lead-based Paint believes that Virginia could lead the nation through a demonstration project designed to bring together the Commonwealth's medical community, the business community, the Head Start Project, the health care industry, the public schools, all parents and grandparents of young children, and the public health community in an effort to coordinate and standardize procedures for the prevention of lead poisoning and to provide the necessary treatment to affected children; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the Department of Health be requested to join with the Medical Society of Virginia, the Virginia Pediatric Society, the health care community, all parents and grandparents of young children, and all citizens and businesses of the Commonwealth in aggressively seeking cooperative ways to prevent, identify, and treat lead poisoning among children. In implementing this request, the department is requested to seek help from the Commonwealth's health regulatory boards; from as many components of the health-care industry as possible, including nurses, clinical laboratories, hospitals, and clinics; from the Virginia Parents and Teachers Association; and from other organizations that may assist in educating parents, grandparents, and children about lead poisoning. The Department is also requested to facilitate a dialogue among medical professionals concerning identifying children at risk of lead poisoning and appropriate blood-lead testing of young children.

The Department shall report to the joint subcommittee on its efforts in this regard by January 1, 1996 and to the Governor and the 1996 Session of the General Assembly as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents.

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