

1996 SESSION

ENROLLED

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 81

Establishing a joint subcommittee to study the availability of dental hygienists in the Commonwealth.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 23, 1996

Agreed to by the Senate, February 21, 1996

WHEREAS, the people of the Commonwealth need high quality dental care which is easily accessible and cost effective; and

WHEREAS, in certain regions of the Commonwealth, particularly in rural and underserved areas, there appears to be an inadequate number of dental care professionals available, including licensed dental hygienists, as a result primarily of insufficient access to appropriate educational programs; and

WHEREAS, dental hygienists, who perform dental services which are educational, diagnostic, therapeutic and preventive, but which do not include the establishment of a final diagnosis or treatment plan for a dental patient, practice under the direction of licensed dentists and play an integral role in the delivery of quality dental care; and

WHEREAS, the introduction of two new accredited programs and sites for dental hygiene education have been proposed and accepted by the General Assembly but remain unfunded; and

WHEREAS, accredited community college programs for dental hygiene education are currently being delayed because state funding is not available in the community college budget; and

WHEREAS, qualified individuals are discouraged from attending one of the five existing dental hygiene programs in the Commonwealth because of expenses associated with lengthy commutes and limited on-campus housing opportunities; and

WHEREAS, as a result of increases in the population and additional requirements for dental hygiene services, there is an escalating demand for dental hygienists; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That a joint subcommittee be established to study the availability of dental hygienists in the Commonwealth. The joint subcommittee shall be composed of 12 members to be appointed as follows: 4 members of the House of Delegates to be appointed by the Speaker of the House; and 3 members of the Senate to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections; 3 citizens of whom 1 shall be a representative of the Virginia Dental Hygienists Association, 1 shall be a representative of the Virginia Dental Association, and 1 shall be a citizen at-large to be appointed by the Speaker of the House; and 2 citizens of whom 1 shall be a dental hygiene educator and a dental hygienist, and 1 shall be a member of the Virginia Board of Dentistry to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections.

The joint subcommittee shall (i) determine the availability of dental hygienists throughout the Commonwealth; (ii) review the Commission on Dental Accreditation standards applicable to alternative accredited educational programs in dental hygiene which parallel existing dental hygiene programs in the Commonwealth; (iii) determine the possibility of existing funding and approved programs to make available additional accredited educational opportunities for those who desire to become dental hygienists; and (iv) consider ways, incentives, and programs which will encourage and make available additional dental hygienists in rural and other underserved areas.

The direct costs of this study shall not exceed \$7,000.

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 1997 Session of the General Assembly as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of 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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