

1998 SESSION

ENROLLED

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 268

Directing the Joint Commission on Health Care to study the adequacy of health care coverage for anorexia nervosa and bulimia.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 17, 1998

Agreed to by the Senate, March 10, 1998

WHEREAS, anorexia nervosa and bulimia are physically debilitating eating disorders associated with mental illness; and

WHEREAS, the mortality rate associated with these eating disorders is reportedly higher than that of any other mental illness; and

WHEREAS, treatment for anorexia nervosa and bulimia requires coordinated medical and mental health treatment, frequently involving extensive inpatient hospitalization; and

WHEREAS, insurers in some states outside the Commonwealth have refused to provide coverage for prolonged, inpatient medical and mental health treatment required by some anorexics and persons with bulimia, contending that such eating disorders are only emotional disorders, thereby seeking to limit inpatient coverage to statutory limits prescribed for mental health treatment, rather than providing inpatient benefit coverages applicable to medical conditions requiring hospitalization, generally; and

WHEREAS, Virginia regulated health insurers, health maintenance organizations, and corporations furnishing health care subscription contracts are not required under the current provisions of Virginia's insurance laws to provide more than 20 days per year in covered inpatient hospitalization for mental health treatment; and

WHEREAS, limiting citizens of the Commonwealth suffering from anorexia nervosa and bulimia to mental health inpatient hospitalization benefits for purposes of medical and mental health treatment requiring hospitalization would be wholly inadequate in many instances; and

WHEREAS, it would be beneficial to the citizens of the Commonwealth suffering from anorexia nervosa and bulimia to have hospitalization and other health care coverage issues associated with these severe disorders, including the causes and appropriate treatments, examined at length; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Joint Commission on Health Care be directed to study the adequacy of health care coverage for anorexia nervosa and bulimia. The Joint Commission shall (i) receive information concerning the causes of these eating disorders; (ii) analyze current anorexia nervosa and bulimia treatment options; (iii) assess the current means by which health insurers, HMOs, and others are currently providing health care coverage for such treatment options; and (iv) make recommendations concerning improvements for such coverage and care.

Technical assistance shall be provided to the Joint Commission by the Bureau of Insurance and the Department of Health.

All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Joint Commission for this study, upon request.

The Joint Commission shall complete its work in time to submit its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the 1999 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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