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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 682

Offered January 21, 1999

Requesting the Board of Health Professions to study the need to collect work-force data on regulated health care professionals.

Patrons—Brink, Darner, Hamilton, Morgan and Shuler; Senator: Woods

Referred to Committee on Health, Welfare and Institutions

WHEREAS, quality health care depends on geographic and demographic access to competent health care professionals; and

WHEREAS, the General Assembly passed legislation during the 1998 Session requiring the Board of Medicine to collect, compile and disseminate, upon request, information on the practice of each physician licensed in the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, the other health regulatory boards know how many health care professionals are regulated and where they live, but have little or no information on whether they actively practice their profession, any areas of specialty, or their practice demographics; and

WHEREAS, there are various private efforts to collect geographic and demographic data on the practice of health care professionals, but it is not coordinated and, therefore, does not demonstrate the access Virginians have to health care or any areas that may have access problems; and

WHEREAS, non-physician health care professionals play a vital role in the health care delivery system, and, in some cases, are the patient's point of entry into the system; and

WHEREAS, the General Assembly, state agencies, and other public policy makers frequently are called upon to make decisions that affect or are affected by geographic and demographic access to health care for Virginians; and

WHEREAS, health care decision-makers in the private sector also make decisions that are influenced by geographical access to health care; and

WHEREAS, since this information only recently is available for physicians, but is not available for any other health care professionals, these decisions must be based on inadequate information or assumptions that may or may not be correct; and

WHEREAS, the health regulatory boards would be in a unique position to collect this information since they regulate all health care professionals required by law to be licensed, certified, or registered; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Board of Health Professions be requested to study the need to collect work-force data on regulated health care professionals. The Board's study is requested to include, but not be limited to, an examination of what data is currently available on the health care work force; where gaps exist in current data collection efforts; what additional specific geographic, demographic or other information on health care professionals would enable the public and private sectors to make more informed health care policy and business decisions; for which additional health care professionals data would be most useful; and the cost of collecting such data as is deemed useful. The Board also is requested to make a recommendation on whether the Commonwealth, through the Department of Health Professions or some other agency, should participate in this data collection based on an analysis of the costs and benefits of such information.

All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Board of Health Professions, upon request.

The Board of Health Professions shall provide a report on the status of its study to the Joint Commission on Health Care on or before October 15, 1999, and shall complete its work in time to submit its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the 2000 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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