

1999 SESSION

ENROLLED

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 759

Requesting the Board of Medicine, in consultation with the Board of Pharmacy, to study the sale of prescription drugs in the Commonwealth via the Internet.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 9, 1999

Agreed to by the Senate, February 23, 1999

WHEREAS, among the many huge inroads the Internet is making in medicine, patients can communicate with their doctors through electronic mail, order prescription refills through online pharmacies, and access medical journals 24 hours a day, 7 days a week; and

WHEREAS, despite these and other enhancements to patients' ability to access health care professionals and medical information, the Internet has also made it possible for American consumers to purchase powerful prescription drugs, including some not yet approved for sale in the United States, without ever seeing a doctor; and

WHEREAS, supporters of Internet sales of prescription drugs argue that consumers are knowledgeable enough to buy medicines over the Internet and that patients should be free to purchase certain drugs without the inconvenience or embarrassment of in-person doctor visits; and

WHEREAS, many health care experts and government regulators fear that the growing trend towards purchasing prescription drugs over the Internet could endanger, and even kill, patients; and

WHEREAS, it is illegal for doctors to prescribe for patients in a state where they are not licensed to practice, and licensed doctors must also meet standards of care that in most states require a doctor-patient relationship to prescribe drugs; and

WHEREAS, these laws and regulations were written before widespread use of the Internet; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Board of Medicine, in consultation with the Board of Pharmacy, be requested to study the sale of prescription drugs in the Commonwealth via the Internet.

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

The Board 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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