

1999 SESSION

ENROLLED

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 347

Requesting the Joint Commission on Health Care, in cooperation with the Department of Health, to examine issues relating to the incidence, reporting, treatment, and prevention of Lyme disease in the Commonwealth.

Agreed to by the Senate, February 18, 1999

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 16, 1999

WHEREAS, Lyme disease is considered the most prevalent vector-borne disease in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Lyme disease is transmitted through the bite of an infected tick; and

WHEREAS, Lyme disease is caused by a spirochete which can be detected through testing of the tick if the tick has been removed and stored for testing; and

WHEREAS, without the results of such tests many physicians are reluctant to treat for Lyme disease, and others may prescribe antibiotics; and

WHEREAS, the indiscriminate use of antibiotics can result and has resulted in the development of resistant organisms; and

WHEREAS, Lyme disease is alleged to be underreported and undertreated; and

WHEREAS, Lyme disease is a devastating illness which can lead to disability and personal loss of health and income; and

WHEREAS, in December of 1998, the federal Food and Drug Administration approved a license for a new vaccine against Lyme disease; and

WHEREAS, physicians and the public may not yet be aware of this new vaccine and its potential to prevent the pain and disability of Lyme disease; and

WHEREAS, although Lyme disease is a reportable disease in Virginia, the Commonwealth does not have a systematic approach at the state level to evaluate the incidence, treatment patterns, validity of the reporting, and viable approaches to prevention and treatment of this disease; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the Joint Commission on Health Care, in cooperation with the Department of Health, be requested to examine issues relating to the incidence, reporting, treatment, and prevention of Lyme disease in the Commonwealth. The study shall examine but not be limited to, (i) the incidence of Lyme disease in Virginia; (ii) whether Lyme disease is underreported in Virginia; (iii) if Lyme disease appears to be underreported in Virginia, why, and what steps can be taken to ensure the accurate reporting of Lyme disease; (iv) what assistance is available from the federal government for prevention, e.g., from the Centers for Disease Control, and for treatment, e.g., through the National Institutes of Health; (v) the extent to which Virginia is accessing any available federal support for the prevention and treatment of Lyme disease; (vi) the most appropriate use of and access to all available support for prevention and treatment of Lyme disease in this Commonwealth; and (vii) the most appropriate and expeditious means of publicizing the availability and benefits of the new vaccine.

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

The Joint Commission 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 processing legislative documents.

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