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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 479
AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE
(Proposed by the Senate Committee on Rules
on February 2, 1999)

(Patron Prior to Substitute—Senator Hanger)

Directing the Joint Subcommittee to Evaluate the Future Direction of Publicly Funded Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services, in consultation with the Hammond Commission on Community Services and In-Patient Care, to undertake a detailed review and develop a facilities downsizing and realignment plan.

WHEREAS, historically the Commonwealth of Virginia has assumed major responsibility for the provision of services for citizens with mental disabilities and substance abuse problems; and

WHEREAS, as recently as 30 years ago, the state mental health and mental retardation facilities were the major providers of care and treatment for these individuals; and

WHEREAS, the enactment of legislation in 1968 enabling the creation of local community mental health and mental retardation services boards provided the vehicle for the local operation of comprehensive community-based mental health and mental retardation services; and

WHEREAS, the average daily census at mental health and mental retardation facilities has been declining steadily at varying degrees as a result of the development of local, community-based programs to provide care and treatment outside of the facility; and

WHEREAS, while there will always be a place for facility care in any good system of services which provides a continuum of care to meet the needs of those requiring services, there is a general recognition by consumers, families, and legislative and executive committees that the person requiring services should receive those services in the community, if appropriate; and

WHEREAS, under optimum conditions, as increasing numbers of persons are discharged to the community, and treatment providers develop additional resources for community care, the need for beds at the facilities will surely decline; and

WHEREAS, as a result, facilities must review their services and undergo some form of "right-sizing" to appropriately meet the demand of the system; and

WHEREAS, it is the desired goal of the administration and the legislature to bring about an appropriate capacity of state mental health and mental retardation facilities to foster the most appropriate and cost-effective services and delivery system; and

WHEREAS, efforts to date, including a contractor's study, have not adequately delineated an appropriate strategy to include specific actions and a timetable for such changes; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the Joint Subcommittee to Evaluate the Future Delivery of Publicly Funded Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services, in consultation with the Hammond Commission on Community Services and In-Patient Care, be directed to undertake a detailed review and develop a facilities downsizing and realignment plan.

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

The Joint Subcommittee 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.