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## HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 571

Offered January 9, 2013

Prefiled December 18, 2012

*Directing the Joint Commission on Health Care to study the feasibility of implementing a program of the training and utilization of primary care personnel to extend the reach of primary care services and reduce health care costs in the Commonwealth. Report.*

Patron—Hope

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, more than one million Virginians are currently uninsured, and the passage of the federal Affordable Care Act will extend health insurance coverage to an estimated four hundred thousand of those uninsured Virginians; and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth currently faces a significant shortage of physicians, nurses, and other primary health care providers, and new approaches are necessary to expand the reach of the primary health care workforce and primary health care services; and

WHEREAS, due to limited access to primary care providers, many Virginians, especially those eligible for Medicaid, are forced to seek care in already-congested emergency departments and clinics, which have been demonstrated to be more costly than other primary care options; and

WHEREAS, a 15-month study of Rockingham Memorial Hospital, a 238-bed facility in Harrisonburg, Virginia, that handles more than 59,000 emergency department visits each year, recently found that 74 percent of emergency department visits were potentially avoidable; and

WHEREAS, Grand-Aides is a program whereby Certified Nurse Aides receive an additional 200 hours of training in a standardized curriculum consisting of basic medical knowledge, disease-specific knowledge, and preceptorship in clinics, hospitals, and home visits, which prepare the individual to observe patients through telephone contacts and home visits and convey information about the patient to a licensed nurse or physician who is responsible for the patient's care; and

WHEREAS, Certified Nurse Aides providing services through the Grand-Aides model work under the direct supervision of a licensed nurse or physician; and

WHEREAS, the Grand-Aides model has been shown to reduce emergency department and clinic visits by individuals seeking primary health care services, help alleviate the burden on primary care workforces that are already stretched thin, and be a less costly alternative to the delivery of primary care in emergency departments and similar settings; and

WHEREAS, implementation of the Grande-Aides model or a similar model could reduce net health care costs by an estimated \$158 for each emergency department visit avoided; 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 feasibility of developing a program for the training and utilization of primary health care personnel to extend the reach of primary care services and reduce health care costs in the Commonwealth.

In conducting its study, the Joint Commission on Health Care shall review available information, including information about the Grande-Aides program and similar programs in other states designed to extend the reach of primary care services and reduce health care costs, and shall develop recommendations related to (i) the potential impact of the Grand-Aides program or a similar program through which individuals trained in the delivery of primary health care services in accordance with standardized protocols that include telephone contacts and home visits and supervised by licensed nurses or physicians provide primary health care services to individuals who would otherwise receive primary health care services in emergency departments or clinics on the number of emergency department or clinic visits in the Commonwealth; (ii) the potential impact of the Grand-Aides program or a similar program on access to primary health care services for Virginians; and (iii) any savings to the Commonwealth's program of medical assistance services or other savings that may be realized through implementation of the Grande-Aides program or a similar program in the Commonwealth .

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

The Joint Commission on Health Care shall complete its meetings by November 30, 2013, and the chairman shall submit to the Division of Legislative Automated Systems an executive summary of its findings and recommendations no later than the first day of the 2014 Regular Session of the General Assembly. The executive summary shall state whether the Joint Commission on Health Care intends to submit to the General Assembly and the Governor a report of its findings and recommendations for

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**59** publication as a House or Senate document. The executive summary and report shall be submitted as  
**60** provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of  
**61** legislative documents and reports and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.