

1995 SESSION

ENROLLED

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 455

Directing the Joint Commission on Health Care, in consultation with the Council on Information Management and the Department of Information Technology, to study "telemedicine."

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 4, 1995

Agreed to by the Senate, February 21, 1995

WHEREAS, according to the American Telemedicine Association, U.S. citizens logged more than one trillion miles of travel for medical purposes in 1993; and

WHEREAS, if only one-quarter of this travel could be avoided by using videoconferencing, the savings could amount to approximately \$132 million per year; and

WHEREAS, telemedicine can improve health, especially in rural areas, by increasing access to health care providers, decreasing the geographic and professional isolation of rural physicians, improving physician recruitment and retention, and improving continuity of care through the use of computers, television, phone lines, cameras, and fax machines; and

WHEREAS, travel for medical care has increased in recent years as a result of the closure of many rural health care facilities, with the failure rate of rural hospitals averaging twelve per month; and

WHEREAS, telemedicine can provide education or training, patient information and diagnostic test results, actual patient examinations by physicians, and transmission of x-rays; and

WHEREAS, the cost of telemedicine has dropped dramatically each year and is becoming increasingly accessible to small hospitals and clinics; and

WHEREAS, telemedicine projects are now in progress in 35 states, some with federal funding, and other states have enacted legislation which supports the telemedicine concept; and

WHEREAS, although the use of telemedicine is increasing accessibility to medical care for many, the lack of insurance reimbursement is still a barrier; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Joint Commission on Health Care, in consultation with the Council on Information Management and the Department of Information Technology, be directed to study the use of telemedicine and evaluate its use to provide better, more accessible healthcare to the citizens of the Commonwealth. The Commission, during the course of its study, shall involve and consult with health care and health insurance providers to ensure the adequate evaluation of all issues involved.

Among, but not limited to, the issues which shall be evaluated is the success rate of the technology, the means of implementation, the potential cost savings, the impact such a system may have on the improvement of health care, and the impediments which currently bar such a system from being successful.

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

The Joint Commission on Health Care shall complete its work in time to submit its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the 1996 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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