

**SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_**

1 Directing the Joint Commission on Health Care to study options for increasing the use of telemental  
2 health services in the Commonwealth. Report.

3 WHEREAS, telemental health is the use of electronic information and telecommunications  
4 technologies to support the delivery of behavioral health services, including clinical care, patient and  
5 professional health-related education, public health, and administration, at a distance by a variety of  
6 mental health service providers, including psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, psychiatric nurse  
7 practitioners, licensed professional counselors, and licensed marriage and family therapists; and

8 WHEREAS, telemental health provides an opportunity to enhance access to and the provision of  
9 mental health services in the Commonwealth; and

10 WHEREAS, telemental health models of care have demonstrated positive outcomes making  
11 telemental health a viable and essential tool for bridging the existing care gap; and

12 WHEREAS, during 2016, expert advisory panels on system structure and financing and mental  
13 health crisis response and emergency services established by the Joint Subcommittee Studying Mental  
14 Health Services in the Commonwealth in the 21st Century jointly established a Telemental Health Work  
15 Group to develop policy proposals to remove impediments to greater use of telemental health services;  
16 and

17 WHEREAS, in October 2016 the Telemental Health Work Group reported on 30 policy options  
18 to address six specific barriers to greater use of telemental health services and provided 12 specific  
19 recommendations for immediate consideration; and

20 WHEREAS, the Joint Subcommittee Studying Mental Health Services in the Commonwealth in  
21 the 21st Century finds that additional analysis and evaluation of policy options, implementation  
22 strategies, and budget and administration requirements is needed, as noted by the Telemental Health  
23 Work Group; now, therefore, be it

24 RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the Joint Commission on  
25 Health Care be directed to study options for increasing the use of telemental health services in the

26 Commonwealth. The Joint Commission on Health Care shall specifically study the issues and  
27 recommendations set forth in the report of the Telemental Health Work Group of the Joint  
28 Subcommittee Studying Mental Health Services in the Commonwealth in the 21st Century.

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

31 The Joint Commission on Health Care shall complete its meetings and report its findings to the  
32 Joint Subcommittee Studying Mental Health Services in the Commonwealth in the 21st Century by  
33 November 1, 2017. The Chairman shall submit to the Division of Legislative Automated Systems an  
34 executive summary of its findings and recommendations no later than the first day of the 2018 Regular  
35 Session of the General Assembly. The executive summary shall state whether the Joint Commission on  
36 Health Care intends to submit to the General Assembly and the Governor a report of its findings and  
37 recommendations for publication as a House or Senate document. The executive summary and report  
38 shall be submitted as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for  
39 the processing of legislative documents and reports and shall be posted on the General Assembly's  
40 website.

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