
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 268 Session of
2019

INTRODUCED BY STRUZZI, HOHENSTEIN, ULLMAN, SCHLOSSBERG, MERSKI
AND JOHNSON-HARRELL, APRIL 29, 2019

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, APRIL 29, 2019

A RESOLUTION

1 Directing the Joint State Government Commission to study the
2 impact of this Commonwealth's current behavioral health needs
3 and behavioral health care system capacity on hospital
4 emergency departments and patient health.

5 WHEREAS, This Commonwealth is the fifth most populous state
6 in the United States with diverse demographics and ever-changing
7 health care needs; and

8 WHEREAS, Approximately 47.2% of adults receive behavioral
9 health services and 41.9% of children receive behavioral health
10 services; and

11 WHEREAS, This Commonwealth maintains a world-class health
12 care system dedicated to removing barriers between behavioral
13 health and physical health; and

14 WHEREAS, Patients experiencing behavioral health issues are
15 not well-served during long stays in hospital emergency
16 departments; and

17 WHEREAS, Hospital emergency departments are unable to find
18 timely and appropriate placements for individuals in need of
19 behavioral health services; and

1 WHEREAS, Prolonged and unnecessary hospital stays can have a
2 range of effects, including an increased dependency, a loss of a
3 patient's confidence in the patient's ability to cope and an
4 increased likelihood of long-term institutionalization;
5 therefore be it

6 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives direct the Joint
7 State Government Commission to study the impact of this
8 Commonwealth's current behavioral health care treatment needs
9 and behavioral health care system capacity on this
10 Commonwealth's hospital emergency departments; and be it further

11 RESOLVED, That the Joint State Government Commission study
12 the impact of this Commonwealth's current behavioral health care
13 treatment needs and behavioral health care system capacity on
14 patient health; and be it further

15 RESOLVED, That the Joint State Government Commission study
16 how current Federal and State laws and regulations impact the
17 ability of this Commonwealth's health care system to treat
18 behavioral health and physical health issues; and be it further

19 RESOLVED, That the Joint State Government Commission study
20 the prevalence of psychiatric boarding, which is the holding of
21 patients in hospital emergency departments for more than a 24-
22 hour period after a patient has been admitted but not physically
23 transferred to an inpatient unit; and be it further

24 RESOLVED, That the Joint State Government Commission study
25 this Commonwealth's current behavioral health care treatment
26 needs to determine the impact of psychiatric boarding on this
27 Commonwealth's behavioral health care system and patients; and
28 be it further

29 RESOLVED, That the study include recommendations to ensure
30 that this Commonwealth's health care providers are able to

1 adequately treat patients with co-occurring behavioral health
2 and physical health issues; and be it further

3 RESOLVED, That the Joint State Government Commission
4 establish an advisory committee comprised of, but not limited
5 to, all of the following individuals:

6 (1) A representative recommended by the Department of
7 Drug and Alcohol Programs.

8 (2) A representative recommended by the Department of
9 Human Services.

10 (3) A physician recommended by the Department of Health.

11 (4) A representative of a rural hospital recommended by
12 the Hospital and Healthsystem Association of Pennsylvania.

13 (5) A representative of an urban hospital recommended by
14 the Hospital and Healthsystem Association of Pennsylvania.

15 (6) A representative of a suburban hospital recommended
16 by the Hospital and Healthsystem Association of Pennsylvania.

17 (7) A representative recommended by the Pennsylvania
18 College of Emergency Physicians.

19 (8) A representative recommended by the Pennsylvania
20 Medical Society.

21 (9) A physician who is a member of the Pennsylvania
22 Psychiatric Society.

23 (10) A representative recommended by the Drug and
24 Alcohol Service Providers Organization of Pennsylvania.

25 (11) A representative recommended by the Pennsylvania
26 Recovery Organizations Alliance.

27 (12) A representative recommended by the Pennsylvania
28 organization for the National Alliance on Mental Illness.

29 (13) A representative recommended by the Rehabilitation
30 and Community Providers Association.

1 (14) A representative recommended by the Pennsylvania
2 Psychiatric Leadership Council.

3 (15) A representative recommended by the Pennsylvania
4 State Nurses Association.

5 (16) A representative recommended by the Pennsylvania
6 Osteopathic Medical Association.

7 (17) Any other representatives from other organizations
8 that are deemed appropriate by the Joint State Government
9 Commission;

10 and be it further

11 RESOLVED, That the Joint State Government Commission issue a
12 report with its findings and recommendations to all of the
13 following:

14 (1) The Health and Human Services Committee of the
15 Senate.

16 (2) The Health Committee of the House of
17 Representatives.

18 (3) The Human Services Committee of the House of
19 Representatives;

20 and be it further

21 RESOLVED, That the Joint State Government Commission solicit
22 input from representatives of all aspects of the health care
23 sector and continuum of care to assist the Joint State
24 Government Commission with its findings and recommendations in
25 the report.