



Study Resolution

Effectiveness of Local Health Department Structure and Financing

Authorized by the Joint Commission on Healthcare on December 7, 2021

WHEREAS, Virginia's goal is to protect the health and promote the well-being of all people in Virginia; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Department of Health and local health departments are part of the primary care safety net for all Virginians providing immunization, testing, public health surveillance and interventions to improve health care outcomes; and

WHEREAS, the local health departments play other critical, public health roles such as ensuring water quality, conducting restaurant health and safety inspections, and helping determine eligibility for Medicaid-funded long-term care services; and

WHEREAS, standards for other health entities such as hospitals, clinics, and nursing homes are reviewed periodically to ensure they are meeting minimum requirements to ensure standardization across agencies; and

WHEREAS, health departments across the country have pursued accreditation to help them improve quality, accountability, transparency, and capacity to provide high quality programs and services; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted challenges in Virginia's public health infrastructure and financing for local health departments, now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, by the Joint Commission on Health Care that staff be directed to study the effectiveness of local health department infrastructure. The study shall (i) catalog and compare public health services provided by local health districts across the state, (ii) identify standards used to evaluate the quality of local health departments and identify if local health departments across Virginia are meeting these standards, (iii) compare Virginia's public health infrastructure and financing to other states to identify advantages and disadvantages, and (iv) recommend any necessary changes to Virginia's current public health structure and financing to further the state's public health goals.

The Joint Commission on Health Care shall make recommendations as necessary and review other related issues as warranted.

In accordance with § 30-169.1 of the Code of Virginia, all agencies of the Commonwealth, including the Virginia Department of Health, Virginia Department of Social Services, and the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services shall provide assistance, information, and data to the JCHC for this study upon request.