VDDHH Legislative Tracking 2015 General Assembly

Each tracking report will include the basic information on the bill as it appears on the Legislative Information System (LIS) plus a section on VDDHH Comments, if any, to explain our interest in the bill. For each bill, we have provided a link to the actual LIS page for that bill so that you can see the actual bill language and track the bill yourself. After the initial report on any bill included here, the information provided will be limited to the bill number (linked to the LIS) and a brief update statement.

Bills included in the VDDHH tracking report will be separated into groups of bills as follows:

1. **VDDHH – Lead Agency**: These are bills which directly impact VDDHH and for which VDDHH is the primary contact agency for the administration. There should only be a few bills in this category.

2. **VDDHH – Actively Tracking/Commenting**: These are bills that VDDHH will actively track and will provide specific, factual information and comments on to ensure that issues in the bill which relate to this agency and the consumers we serve are identified. “Actively Tracking” means that VDDHH will consistently check on the status of these bills. The agency may, if necessary and appropriate, testify at committee meetings on these bills or provide input to either the patron of the bill or to the LEAD agency responsible for the bill. VDDHH is NOT the lead agency on these bills and our level of involvement may be limited.

3. **VDDHH – Not Actively Tracking/General Interest**: These are bills that may be of general interest to consumers, family members or professionals who receive our tracking reports. VDDHH is not actively tracking these bills and will not be providing comment or attending committee meetings on these bills.

**PLEASE NOTE**: VDDHH will only report a “position” on a bill when the Governor’s office has taken a position on that bill. Please do not assume that VDDHH “supports” or “opposes” a bill based on the information provided in this report. This report is only intended to provide the facts of a bill as VDDHH knows them.

If a bill is “killed” during the session, it will be removed from the tracking list. VDDHH may also remove bills from the list if changes are made to the bill which eliminate the specific issues of interest to this agency or the consumers we serve.

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**VDDHH – Lead Agency**

VDDHH is not lead agency on any bills as of 1/16/2015.
VDDHH – Actively Tracking/Commenting:

UPDATED: NOTE 1/27/15. HB 1956 Hospitals; patients who are deaf or hard-of-hearing.

Introduced by: Robert D. Orrock, Sr. | all patrons ... notes |

SUMMARY AS INTRODUCED:

Hospitals; patients who are deaf or hard-of-hearing. Requires the Board of Health to include in regulations governing hospitals a provision that each licensed hospital (i) develop a process for identifying patients who are deaf or hard-of-hearing and (ii) take steps to ensure that patients who are deaf or hard-of-hearing are able to effectively communicate with health care providers involved in their care.

FULL TEXT

• 01/13/15 House: Prefiled and ordered printed; offered 01/14/15 15101900D pdf

HISTORY

• 01/13/15 House: Prefiled and ordered printed; offered 01/14/15 15101900D
• 01/13/15 House: Referred to Committee on Health, Welfare and Institutions

NOTE: At the committee meeting on 1/27/15, Delegate Orrock offered an “amendment in the nature of a substitute” (called a “substitute” for short). Basically, this kind of amendment is a major change to the language of the bill, either changing the place in the Code where the bill will be or the kind of bill it is. The language of the substitute is not available yet. Arva Priola, who worked with Delegate Orrock to get this bill into the General Assembly, has reported that the substitute will expand the affected consumers to include all sensory disabilities and will direct the Department of Health to bring together stakeholders (consumer groups and the Hospital Association) to discuss the issues and develop a model proposal. It might also specify access for “caregivers” of patients with sensory disabilities. The substitute bill will be voted on in the committee on Thursday, January 29th. We do not know yet if the committee will discuss the bill in depth again or just vote on it. If it passes the committee, it will go to the full House of Delegates for a vote and, if it passes the House, it will go over to the Senate.

VDDHH Comments on HB1956: VDDHH is not the lead agency on the bill. The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) is the lead agency. We have asked for comments from consumers to share with VDH. We received more than 25 comments in support of this bill.
SUMMARY AS INTRODUCED:
Information on services for students identified as hearing or visually impaired; school division website posting. Requires each local school board to annually post on the school division's website information describing the educational and other services available through the Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind, the Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing, and the Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired to students who are identified as hearing impaired or visually impaired, inform parents of its availability, and ensure that packets of such information are available in an accessible format for review by parents who do not have Internet access. Current law requires distribution of physical copies of such information.

FULL TEXT
• 01/09/15 House: Prefiled and ordered printed; offered 01/14/15 15101803D.pdf

HISTORY
• 01/09/15 House: Prefiled and ordered printed; offered 01/14/15 15101803D
• 01/09/15 House: Referred to Committee on Education
• 01/23/15 House: Assigned Education sub: Elementary and Secondary Education

NOTE: HB1679 is on the agenda in the subcommittee on Wednesday, January 28th as soon as the full Committee on Education finishes their meeting. The full Committee meets at 8:30 a.m. in House Room D. VDDHH has not received a request for interpreters for this meeting at this time.

VDDHH Comments on HB1679: This bill changes the way the Department of Education may share information about VDDHH, the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired and the Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind. VDDHH will provide minimal comment on this bill. The information sharing described in this bill has been in place for a number of years. The only change as a result of this bill will be to change the method of information sharing.

Updated NOTE on 1/26/15 HB 2156 Health insurance; coverage for hearing aids and related professional services.
Introduced by: K. Rob Krupicka | all patrons ... notes | add to my profiles
SUMMARY AS INTRODUCED:
Health insurance; coverage for hearing aids and related professional services. Requires health insurers, health maintenance organizations, and corporations providing health care coverage subscription contracts to provide coverage for hearing aids and related professional services when prescribed or provided by a licensed audiologist.

FULL TEXT
• 01/14/15 House: Prefiled and ordered printed; offered 01/14/15 15101245D.pdf

HISTORY
• 01/14/15 House: Prefiled and ordered printed; offered 01/14/15 15101245D
• 01/14/15 House: Referred to Committee on Commerce and Labor
NOTE: The bill was not included on the committee report from the 1/22/15 meeting. The next meeting of the committee will be on 1/27/15 and the agenda for that meeting does not include this bill.

VDDHH Comments on HB2156: VDDHH is not the lead agency on this bill. VDDHH will provide comments on the bill to the lead agency (not known who at this time). Past efforts to require insurance companies to provide coverage for hearing aids have not been successful. Remember that any “mandated benefit” bill must go through the Mandated Benefits Commission for a full study.

VDDHH – Not Actively Tracking/General Interest – VDDHH will not be updating information on these bills. If you are interested in tracking these bills, you may want to use the links provided below.

SB 1224 Commissioner for Aging and Rehabilitative Services; voluntary certification program for service dog.
Introduced by: Bryce E. Reeves | all patrons ... notes | add to my profiles

SUMMARY AS INTRODUCED:
Commissioner for Aging and Rehabilitative Services; voluntary certification program for service dogs; penalty. Requires the Commissioner for Aging and Rehabilitative Services to establish a voluntary certification program for service dogs that have completed training from an accredited training provider. No person may represent a dog as a "certified service dog" unless the dog has been granted the certification by the Commission. Under the bill, any person who represents a dog as a "certified service dog" when it is not is guilty of a Class 4 misdemeanor punishable by a fine of not more than $250.

FULL TEXT
• 01/14/15 Senate: Prefiled and ordered printed; offered 01/14/15 15101339D pdf

HISTORY
• 01/14/15 Senate: Prefiled and ordered printed; offered 01/14/15 15101339D
• 01/14/15 Senate: Referred to Committee on Rehabilitation and Social Services

VDDHH Comments on SB1224: VDDHH is not the lead agency on this bill and will not be actively tracking it. As written, the bill does not include hearing dogs, only “service dogs.” VDDHH does not have any information on the background of this bill.

VDDHH was asked to include the following two bills in our tracking report by an interested individual. VDDHH does not have any comments on these bills and will not be actively tracking them. The two bills are both about savings trust accounts.
SUMMARY AS INTRODUCED:

Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) savings trust accounts established; administered by the Virginia College Savings Plan. Establishes ABLE savings trust accounts to be administered by the Virginia College Savings Plan to facilitate the saving of private funds for paying the qualified disability expenses of certain disabled individuals. Under the federal Achieving a Better Life Experience Act of 2014, Congress authorized states to establish ABLE savings trust accounts to assist individuals and families in saving and paying for the education, housing, transportation, employment training and support, assistive technology and personal support services, health, prevention and wellness, financial management and administrative services, and other expenses of individuals who were disabled or blind prior to the age of 26. The Virginia College Savings Plan will be the designated state agency administering ABLE savings trust accounts. Earnings on contributions to ABLE savings trust accounts are exempt from federal income tax.

Under the bill, earnings on ABLE savings trust accounts will be excluded from Virginia taxable income. In addition, the bill provides that beginning with taxable year 2016 contributors to ABLE savings trust accounts will be allowed an individual income tax deduction up to $4,000 in contributions per year per account. Persons age 70 or over will not be subject to the $4,000 per account maximum annual deduction.

FULL TEXT

• 01/22/15 House: Presented and ordered printed 15103326D pdf

HISTORY

• 01/22/15 House: Presented and ordered printed 15103326D
• 01/22/15 House: Referred to Committee on Education
• 01/26/15 House: Assigned Education sub: Higher Education
Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) savings trust accounts established; administered by the Virginia College Savings Plan. Establishes ABLE savings trust accounts to be administered by the Virginia College Savings Plan to facilitate the saving of private funds for paying the qualified disability expenses of certain disabled individuals. Under the federal Achieving a Better Life Experience Act of 2014, Congress authorized states to establish ABLE savings trust accounts to assist individuals and families in saving and paying for the education, housing, transportation, employment training and support, assistive technology and personal support services, health, prevention and wellness, financial management and administrative services, and other expenses of individuals who were disabled or blind prior to the age of 26. The Virginia College Savings Plan will be the designated state agency administering ABLE savings trust accounts. Earnings on contributions to ABLE savings trust accounts are exempt from federal income tax.

Under the bill, earnings on ABLE savings trust accounts will be excluded from Virginia taxable income. In addition, the bill provides that beginning with taxable year 2016 contributors to ABLE savings trust accounts will be allowed an individual income tax deduction up to $4,000 in contributions per year per account. Persons age 70 or over will not be subject to the $4,000 per account maximum annual deduction.