

25103463D

HOUSE BILL NO. 2446

Offered January 13, 2025

Prefiled January 8, 2025

A *BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding in Chapter 2 of Title 32.1 an article numbered 23, consisting of sections numbered 32.1-73.28 through 32.1-73.31, relating to Postpartum Depression Education Act; report.*

Patrons—Mundon King, Anthony, Bennett-Parker, Clark, Cole, Convors-Fowler, Cousins, Feggans, Helmer, Henson, Hernandez, Hope, Keys-Gamarra, LeVere Bolling, Maldonado, Martinez, McClure, Rasoul and Seibold

Referred to Committee on Health and Human Services

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding in Chapter 2 of Title 32.1 an article numbered 23, consisting of sections numbered 32.1-73.28 through 32.1-73.31, as follows:

Article 23.

Postpartum Depression Education Act.

§ 32.1-73.28. Public awareness campaign; Department authorized to seek funding.

A. *The Department, in collaboration with the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, shall develop and implement a statewide public awareness campaign on perinatal and postpartum depression. Such campaign shall:*

- 1. *Increase awareness about the symptoms, risk factors, and treatment options for perinatal and postpartum depression;*
- 2. *Provide culturally appropriate and accessible materials for diverse populations;*
- 3. *Provide information to health care providers, birthing individuals, families, and community organizations;*
- 4. *Utilize multiple platforms, including digital media, print materials, and community outreach programs, to maximize public engagement; and*
- 5. *Highlight the importance of seeking early treatment for and reducing the stigma associated with perinatal and postpartum depression.*

B. *The Department may seek and accept funding from any public or private entities to implement the provisions of this article.*

§ 32.1-73.29. Development of educational materials and resources.

A. *The Department shall create and distribute educational materials on perinatal and postpartum depression. Such materials shall include:*

- 1. *Fact sheets on symptoms, causes, and available treatment options;*
- 2. *Contact information for local, state, and national resources, including crisis hotlines, counseling services, and support groups;*
- 3. *Guidance for health care providers on screening, diagnosing, and managing perinatal and postpartum depression; and*
- 4. *Information on the impact of untreated perinatal and postpartum depression on maternal and infant health outcomes.*

B. *The Department shall distribute materials prepared pursuant to subsection A to:*

- 1. *Health care providers, including obstetricians, midwives, pediatricians, and primary care physicians;*
- 2. *Hospitals, birthing centers, and clinics;*
- 3. *Community organizations, including faith-based groups and nonprofit organizations; and*
- 4. *Public health offices and other relevant government agencies.*

§ 32.1-73.30. Online resource hub.

The Department shall develop and maintain an online resource hub that provides:

- 1. *Up-to-date information on perinatal and postpartum depression;*
- 2. *A directory of mental health providers specializing in perinatal and postpartum care;*
- 3. *Information on available support groups, counseling services, and treatment options; and*
- 4. *A platform for individuals and families to share experiences and connect with community resources.*

§ 32.1-73.31. Annual report.

A. *The Department shall submit an annual report to the Governor and the General Assembly that includes:*

- 1. *Metrics on public engagement with the programs implemented pursuant to this article;*
- 2. *Feedback from health care providers, community organizations, and individuals served by programs*

58 *implemented pursuant to this article;*

59 *3. Progress in reducing stigma and increasing early detection and treatment of perinatal and postpartum*
60 *depression; and*

61 *4. Recommendations for improving or expanding programs implemented pursuant to this article.*

62 *B. The Department shall publish the annual report prepared pursuant to subsection A on its website.*

63 **2. The Department of Health shall submit the first report prepared pursuant to § 32.1-73.31 of the**
64 **Code of Virginia, as created by this act, by December 31, 2026.**