2025 SESSION

ENROLLED

1	VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY — CHAPTER
2 3	An Act to amend and reenact §§ 16.1-123.1, 16.1-241, 19.2-183, and 19.2-186 of the Code of Virginia, relating to jurisdiction of district courts in felony cases; specialty dockets; Behavioral Health Docket Act.
4	[H 1713]
5	Approved
6	Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:
7	1. That §§ 16.1-123.1, 16.1-241, 19.2-183, and 19.2-186 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted as follows:
8 9	§ 16.1-123.1. Criminal and traffic jurisdiction of general district courts.
10	1. Each general district court shall have, within the county, including the towns within such county, or city
11	for which it is established, exclusive original jurisdiction for the trial of:
12 13	a. All offenses against the ordinances, laws and bylaws of such county, including the towns within such county, or city or of any service district within such county or city, except a city ordinance enacted pursuant
14	to §§ 18.2-372 through 18.2-391.1. All offenses against the ordinances of a service district shall be
15	prosecuted in the name of such service district;
16 17	b. All other misdemeanors and traffic infractions arising in such county, including the towns in such county, or city.
18	2. Each general district court which is established within a city shall also have:
19	a. Concurrent jurisdiction with the circuit court of such city for all violations of state revenue and election
20 21	laws; and b. Exclusive original jurisdiction, except as otherwise provided by general law or the city charter, within
21	the area extending for one mile beyond the corporate limits thereof, for the trial of all offenses against the
23	ordinances, laws and bylaws of the city.
24 25	3. If a city lying within a county has no general district court provided by city charter or under general low then the general district court of the county within which such aity lies shall have the same invisid district.
25 26	law, then the general district court of the county within which such city lies shall have the same jurisdiction in such city as a general district court established for a city would have.
27	4. Each general district court shall have such other jurisdiction, exclusive or concurrent, as may be
28 29	conferred on such court by general law or by provisions of the charter of the city for which the court was established.
29 30	5. Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection C of § 19.2-244, any county general district court
31	authorized by § 16.1-69.35:01 to be established in a city shall have exclusive original jurisdiction for the trial
32	of all misdemeanors committed within or upon the general district court courtroom.
33 34	6. Upon certification by the general district court of any felony charge and ancillary misdemeanor charge or when an appeal of a conviction of an offense in general district court is noted, jurisdiction as to such
35	charges shall vest in the circuit court, unless such case is reopened pursuant to § 16.1-133.1; a final judgment,
36	order, or decree is modified, vacated, or suspended pursuant to Supreme Court of Virginia Rule 1:1; or the
37 38	appeal has been withdrawn in the general district court within 10 days pursuant to § 16.1-133; or the judge of the general district court, with the consent of the accused and the attorney for the Commonwealth, has
39	delayed a proceeding pursuant to § 19.2-183 or 19.2-186 in order for the accused to complete a specialty
40	docket established pursuant to § 18.2-254.2 or a behavioral health docket established pursuant to §
41 42	18.2-254.3.7. Nothing herein shall affect the jurisdiction conferred on the juvenile and domestic relations district
43	court by Chapter 11 (§ 16.1-226 et seq.).
44	§ 16.1-241. Jurisdiction; consent for abortion.
45 46	The judges of the juvenile and domestic relations district court elected or appointed under this law shall be conservators of the peace within the corporate limits of the cities and the boundaries of the counties for which
47	they are respectively chosen and within one mile beyond the limits of such cities and counties. Except as
48	hereinafter provided, each juvenile and domestic relations district court shall have, within the limits of the
49 50	territory for which it is created, exclusive original jurisdiction, and within one mile beyond the limits of said
50 51	city or county, concurrent jurisdiction with the juvenile court or courts of the adjoining city or county, over all cases, matters and proceedings involving:
52	A. The custody, visitation, support, control or disposition of a child:
53	1. Who is alleged to be abused, neglected, in need of services, in need of supervision, a status offender, or
54 55	delinquent except where the jurisdiction of the juvenile court has been terminated or divested; 2. Who is abandoned by his parent or other custodian or who by reason of the absence or physical or
55 56	mental incapacity of his parents is without parental care and guardianship;

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57 2a. Who is at risk of being abused or neglected by a parent or custodian who has been adjudicated as58 having abused or neglected another child in the care of the parent or custodian;

3. Whose custody, visitation or support is a subject of controversy or requires determination. In such cases jurisdiction shall be concurrent with and not exclusive of courts having equity jurisdiction, except as provided in § 16.1-244;
4. Who is the subject of an entrustment agreement entered into pursuant to § 63.2-903 or 63.2-1817 or

4. Who is the subject of an entrustment agreement entered into pursuant to § 63.2-903 or 63.2-1817 or whose parent or parents for good cause desire to be relieved of his care and custody;

5. Where the termination of residual parental rights and responsibilities is sought. In such cases jurisdiction shall be concurrent with and not exclusive of courts having equity jurisdiction, as provided in § 16.1-244;

6. Who is charged with a traffic infraction as defined in § 46.2-100; or

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7. Who is alleged to have refused to take a blood test in violation of § 18.2-268.2.

69 In any case in which the juvenile is alleged to have committed a violent juvenile felony enumerated in 70 subsection B of § 16.1-269.1, and for any charges ancillary thereto, the jurisdiction of the juvenile court shall 71 be limited to conducting a preliminary hearing to determine if there is probable cause to believe that the juvenile committed the act alleged and that the juvenile was 16 years of age or older at the time of the 72 73 commission of the alleged offense, and any matters related thereto. In any case in which the juvenile is 74 alleged to have committed a violent juvenile felony enumerated in subsection C of § 16.1-269.1, and for all 75 charges ancillary thereto, if the attorney for the Commonwealth has given notice as provided in subsection C of § 16.1-269.1, the jurisdiction of the juvenile court shall be limited to conducting a preliminary hearing to 76 77 determine if there is probable cause to believe that the juvenile committed the act alleged and that the 78 juvenile was 16 years of age or older at the time of the commission of the alleged offense, and any matters 79 related thereto. A determination by the juvenile court following a preliminary hearing pursuant to subsection 80 B or C of § 16.1-269.1 to certify a charge to the grand jury shall divest the juvenile court of jurisdiction over 81 the charge and any ancillary charge. In any case in which a transfer hearing is held pursuant to subsection A 82 of § 16.1-269.1, if the juvenile court determines to transfer the case, jurisdiction of the juvenile court over the 83 case shall be divested as provided in § 16.1-269.6.

In all other cases involving delinquent acts, and in cases in which an ancillary charge remains after a
violent juvenile felony charge has been dismissed or a violent juvenile felony has been reduced to a lesser
offense not constituting a violent juvenile felony, the jurisdiction of the juvenile court shall not be divested
unless there is a transfer pursuant to subsection A of § 16.1-269.1.

88 The authority of the juvenile court to adjudicate matters involving the custody, visitation, support, control 89 or disposition of a child shall not be limited to the consideration of petitions filed by a mother, father or legal 90 guardian but shall include petitions filed at any time by any party with a legitimate interest therein. A party 91 with a legitimate interest shall be broadly construed and shall include, but not be limited to, grandparents, 92 step-grandparents, stepparents, former stepparents, blood relatives and family members. A party with a 93 legitimate interest shall not include any person (i) whose parental rights have been terminated by court order, 94 either voluntarily or involuntarily, (ii) whose interest in the child derives from or through a person whose 95 parental rights have been terminated by court order, either voluntarily or involuntarily, including, but not 96 limited to, grandparents, stepparents, former stepparents, blood relatives and family members, if the child subsequently has been legally adopted, except where a final order of adoption is entered pursuant to § 97 98 63.2-1241, or (iii) who has been convicted of a violation of subsection A of § 18.2-61, § 18.2-63, subsection 99 B of § 18.2-366, or an equivalent offense of another state, the United States, or any foreign jurisdiction, when the child who is the subject of the petition was conceived as a result of such violation. The authority of the 100 juvenile court to consider a petition involving the custody of a child shall not be proscribed or limited where 101 the child has previously been awarded to the custody of a local board of social services. 102

A1. Making specific findings of fact required by state or federal law to enable a child to apply for or receive a state or federal benefit. For the purposes of this subsection only, when the court has obtained jurisdiction over the case of any child, the court may continue to exercise its jurisdiction until such person reaches 21 years of age, for the purpose of entering findings of fact or amending past orders, to include findings of fact necessary for the person to petition the federal government for status as a special immigrant juvenile, as defined by 8 U.S.C. § 1101(a)(27)(J).

B. The admission of minors for inpatient treatment in a mental health facility in accordance with the provisions of Article 16 (§ 16.1-335 et seq.) and the involuntary admission of a person with mental illness or judicial certification of eligibility for admission to a training center for persons with intellectual disability in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 8 (§ 37.2-800 et seq.) of Title 37.2. Jurisdiction of the involuntary admission and certification of adults shall be concurrent with the general district court.

114 C. Except as provided in subsections D and H, judicial consent to such activities as may require parental 115 consent may be given for a child who has been separated from his parents, guardian, legal custodian or other 116 person standing in loco parentis and is in the custody of the court when such consent is required by law.

117 D. Judicial consent for emergency surgical or medical treatment for a child who is neither married nor has 118 ever been married, when the consent of his parent, guardian, legal custodian or other person standing in loco

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119 parentis is unobtainable because such parent, guardian, legal custodian or other person standing in loco 120 parentis (i) is not a resident of the Commonwealth, (ii) has his whereabouts unknown, (iii) cannot be 121 consulted with promptness, reasonable under the circumstances, or (iv) fails to give such consent or provide

122 such treatment when requested by the judge to do so.

123 E. Any person charged with deserting, abandoning or failing to provide support for any person in violation 124 of law.

F. Any parent, guardian, legal custodian or other person standing in loco parentis of a child:

1. Who has been abused or neglected;

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127 2. Who is the subject of an entrustment agreement entered into pursuant to § 63.2-903 or 63.2-1817 or is 128 otherwise before the court pursuant to subdivision A 4; or

129 3. Who has been adjudicated in need of services, in need of supervision, or delinquent, if the court finds 130 that such person has by overt act or omission induced, caused, encouraged or contributed to the conduct of the child complained of in the petition. 131

G. Petitions filed by or on behalf of a child or such child's parent, guardian, legal custodian or other 132 133 person standing in loco parentis for the purpose of obtaining treatment, rehabilitation or other services that 134 are required by law to be provided for that child or such child's parent, guardian, legal custodian or other 135 person standing in loco parentis. Jurisdiction in such cases shall be concurrent with and not exclusive of that of courts having equity jurisdiction as provided in § 16.1-244. 136

137 H. Judicial consent to apply for a work permit for a child when such child is separated from his parents, 138 legal guardian or other person standing in loco parentis.

I. The prosecution and punishment of persons charged with ill-treatment, abuse, abandonment or neglect 139 140 of children or with any violation of law that causes or tends to cause a child to come within the purview of this law, or with any other offense against the person of a child. In prosecution for felonies over which the 141 142 court has jurisdiction, jurisdiction shall be limited to determining whether or not there is probable cause.

143 J. All offenses in which one family or household member is charged with an offense in which another 144 family or household member is the victim and all offenses under § 18.2-49.1.

In prosecution for felonies over which the court has jurisdiction, jurisdiction shall be limited to 145 146 determining whether or not there is probable cause, except that the court shall retain jurisdiction for any 147 felony in which the proceeding has been delayed, with the consent of the accused and the attorney for the Commonwealth, pursuant to § 19.2-183 or 19.2-186 in order for the accused to complete a specialty docket 148 established pursuant to § 18.2-254.2 or a behavioral health docket established pursuant to § 18.2-254.3. Any 149 objection based on jurisdiction under this subsection shall be made before a jury is impaneled and sworn in a 150 151 jury trial or, in a nonjury trial, before the earlier of when the court begins to hear or receive evidence or the 152 first witness is sworn, or it shall be conclusively waived for all purposes. Any such objection shall not affect or be grounds for challenging directly or collaterally the jurisdiction of the court in which the case is tried. 153

154 K. Petitions filed by a natural parent, whose parental rights to a child have been voluntarily relinquished pursuant to a court proceeding, to seek a reversal of the court order terminating such parental rights. No such 155 petition shall be accepted, however, after the child has been placed in the home of adoptive parents. 156

157 L. Any person who seeks spousal support after having separated from his spouse. A decision under this 158 subdivision shall not be res judicata in any subsequent action for spousal support in a circuit court. A circuit court shall have concurrent original jurisdiction in all causes of action under this subdivision. 159

160 M. Petitions filed for the purpose of obtaining an order of protection pursuant to § 16.1-253.1, 16.1-253.4, or 16.1-279.1, and all petitions filed for the purpose of obtaining an order of protection pursuant to § 161 162 19.2-152.8, 19.2-152.9, or 19.2-152.10 if either the alleged victim or the respondent is a juvenile.

163 N. Any person who escapes or remains away without proper authority from a residential care facility in 164 which he had been placed by the court or as a result of his commitment to the Virginia Department of 165 Juvenile Justice. 166

O. Petitions for emancipation of a minor pursuant to Article 15 (§ 16.1-331 et seq.).

P. Petitions for enforcement of administrative support orders entered pursuant to Chapter 19 (§ 63.2-1900 167 et seq.) of Title 63.2, or by another state in the same manner as if the orders were entered by a juvenile and 168 domestic relations district court upon the filing of a certified copy of such order in the juvenile and domestic 169 170 relations district court.

Q. Petitions for a determination of parentage pursuant to Chapter 3.1 (§ 20-49.1 et seq.) of Title 20. A 171 172 circuit court shall have concurrent original jurisdiction to the extent provided for in § 20-49.2. 173

R. [Repealed.]

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S. Petitions filed by school boards against parents pursuant to §§ 16.1-241.2 and 22.1-279.3.

T. Petitions to enforce any request for information or subpoena that is not complied with or to review any 175 176 refusal to issue a subpoena in an administrative appeal regarding child abuse and neglect pursuant to § 177 63.2-1526.

178 U. Petitions filed in connection with parental placement adoption consent hearings pursuant to § 179 63.2-1233. Such proceedings shall be advanced on the docket so as to be heard by the court within 10 days of

180 filing of the petition, or as soon thereafter as practicable so as to provide the earliest possible disposition. 181 V. Petitions filed for the purpose of obtaining the court's assistance with the execution of consent to an adoption when the consent to an adoption is executed pursuant to the laws of another state and the laws of 182 183 that state provide for the execution of consent to an adoption in the court of the Commonwealth.

184 W. Petitions filed by a juvenile seeking judicial authorization for a physician to perform an abortion if a minor elects not to seek consent of an authorized person. 185

186 After a hearing, a judge shall issue an order authorizing a physician to perform an abortion, without the consent of any authorized person, if he finds that (i) the minor is mature enough and well enough informed to 187 make her abortion decision, in consultation with her physician, independent of the wishes of any authorized 188 189 person, or (ii) the minor is not mature enough or well enough informed to make such decision, but the desired 190 abortion would be in her best interest.

191 If the judge authorizes an abortion based on the best interests of the minor, such order shall expressly state 192 that such authorization is subject to the physician or his agent giving notice of intent to perform the abortion; 193 however, no such notice shall be required if the judge finds that such notice would not be in the best interest 194 of the minor. In determining whether notice is in the best interest of the minor, the judge shall consider the totality of the circumstances; however, he shall find that notice is not in the best interest of the minor if he 195 196 finds that (a) one or more authorized persons with whom the minor regularly and customarily resides is abusive or neglectful and (b) every other authorized person, if any, is either abusive or neglectful or has 197 refused to accept responsibility as parent, legal guardian, custodian or person standing in loco parentis. 198

199 The minor may participate in the court proceedings on her own behalf, and the court may appoint a 200 guardian ad litem for the minor. The court shall advise the minor that she has a right to counsel and shall, upon her request, appoint counsel for her. 201

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the provisions of this subsection shall govern proceedings 202 203 relating to consent for a minor's abortion. Court proceedings under this subsection and records of such proceedings shall be confidential. Such proceedings shall be given precedence over other pending matters so 204 205 that the court may reach a decision promptly and without delay in order to serve the best interests of the minor. Court proceedings under this subsection shall be heard and decided as soon as practicable but in no 206 207 event later than four days after the petition is filed.

208 An expedited confidential appeal to the circuit court shall be available to any minor for whom the court 209 denies an order authorizing an abortion without consent or without notice. Any such appeal shall be heard and decided no later than five days after the appeal is filed. The time periods required by this subsection shall 210 be subject to subsection B of § 1-210. An order authorizing an abortion without consent or without notice 211 212 shall not be subject to appeal. 213

No filing fees shall be required of the minor at trial or upon appeal.

214 If either the original court or the circuit court fails to act within the time periods required by this subsection, the court before which the proceeding is pending shall immediately authorize a physician to 215 216 perform the abortion without consent of or notice to an authorized person.

Nothing contained in this subsection shall be construed to authorize a physician to perform an abortion on 217 a minor in circumstances or in a manner that would be unlawful if performed on an adult woman. 218

A physician shall not knowingly perform an abortion upon an unemancipated minor unless consent has 219 been obtained or the minor delivers to the physician a court order entered pursuant to this section and the 220 221 physician or his agent provides such notice as such order may require. However, neither consent nor judicial 222 authorization nor notice shall be required if the minor declares that she is abused or neglected and the 223 attending physician has reason to suspect that the minor may be an abused or neglected child as defined in § 224 63.2-100 and reports the suspected abuse or neglect in accordance with § 63.2-1509; or if there is a medical 225 emergency, in which case the attending physician shall certify the facts justifying the exception in the minor's 226 medical record. 227

For purposes of this subsection:

228 "Authorization" means the minor has delivered to the physician a notarized, written statement signed by 229 an authorized person that the authorized person knows of the minor's intent to have an abortion and consents 230 to such abortion being performed on the minor.

"Authorized person" means (i) a parent or duly appointed legal guardian or custodian of the minor or (ii) a 231 232 person standing in loco parentis, including, but not limited to, a grandparent or adult sibling with whom the 233 minor regularly and customarily resides and who has care and control of the minor. Any person who knows he is not an authorized person and who knowingly and willfully signs an authorization statement consenting 234 235 to an abortion for a minor is guilty of a Class 3 misdemeanor.

236 "Consent" means that (i) the physician has given notice of intent to perform the abortion and has received 237 authorization from an authorized person, or (ii) at least one authorized person is present with the minor 238 seeking the abortion and provides written authorization to the physician, which shall be witnessed by the 239 physician or an agent thereof. In either case, the written authorization shall be incorporated into the minor's 240 medical record and maintained as a part thereof.

241 "Medical emergency" means any condition which, on the basis of the physician's good faith clinical judgment, so complicates the medical condition of the pregnant minor as to necessitate the immediate 242

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243 abortion of her pregnancy to avert her death or for which a delay will create a serious risk of substantial and 244 irreversible impairment of a major bodily function.

"Notice of intent to perform the abortion" means that (i) the physician or his agent has given actual notice 245 246 of his intention to perform such abortion to an authorized person, either in person or by telephone, at least 24 247 hours previous to the performance of the abortion or (ii) the physician or his agent, after a reasonable effort to 248 notify an authorized person, has mailed notice to an authorized person by certified mail, addressed to such 249 person at his usual place of abode, with return receipt requested, at least 72 hours prior to the performance of 250 the abortion.

251 "Perform an abortion" means to interrupt or terminate a pregnancy by any surgical or nonsurgical 252 procedure or to induce a miscarriage as provided in § 18.2-72, 18.2-73, or 18.2-74.

"Unemancipated minor" means a minor who has not been emancipated by (i) entry into a valid marriage 253 254 entered into prior to July 1, 2024, or lawfully entered into in another state or country prior to being domiciled 255 in the Commonwealth, even though the marriage may have been terminated by dissolution; (ii) active duty 256 with any of the Armed Forces of the United States; (iii) willingly living separate and apart from his or her 257 parents or guardian, with the consent or acquiescence of the parents or guardian; or (iv) entry of an order of 258 emancipation pursuant to Article 15 (§ 16.1-331 et seq.).

259 X. Petitions filed pursuant to Article 17 (§ 16.1-349 et seq.) relating to standby guardians for minor 260 children.

Y. Petitions involving minors filed pursuant to § 32.1-45.1 relating to obtaining a blood specimen or test 261 262 results.

Z. Petitions filed pursuant to § 16.1-283.3 for review of voluntary agreements for continuation of services 263 264 and support for persons who meet the eligibility criteria for the Fostering Futures program set forth in § 265 63.2-919.

266 The ages specified in this law refer to the age of the child at the time of the acts complained of in the 267 petition.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no fees shall be charged by a sheriff for the service of any 268 269 process in a proceeding pursuant to subdivision A 3, except as provided in subdivision A 6 of § 17.1-272, or 270 subsection B, D, M, or R.

271 Notwithstanding the provisions of § 18.2-71, any physician who performs an abortion in violation of 272 subsection W shall be is guilty of a Class 3 misdemeanor.

273 Upon certification by the juvenile and domestic relations district court of any felony charge and ancillary 274 misdemeanor charge committed by an adult or when an appeal of a conviction or adjudication of delinquency 275 of an offense in the juvenile and domestic relations district court is noted, jurisdiction as to such charges shall 276 vest in the circuit court, unless such case is reopened pursuant to § 16.1-133.1; a final judgment, order, or decree is modified, vacated, or suspended pursuant to Supreme Court of Virginia Rule 1:1; or the appeal has 277 been withdrawn in the juvenile and domestic relations district court within 10 days pursuant to § 16.1-133. 278

279 § 19.2-183. Examination of witnesses; assistance of counsel; evidentiary matters and remedies; 280 power to adjourn case.

281 A. The judge before whom any person is brought for an offense shall, as soon as may be practical, in the 282 presence of such person, examine on oath the witnesses for and against him. Before conducting the hearing or 283 accepting a waiver of the hearing, the judge shall advise the accused of his right to counsel and, if the accused 284 is indigent and the offense charged be punishable by confinement in jail or the state correctional facility, the 285 judge shall appoint counsel as provided by law.

286 B. At the hearing the judge shall, in the presence of the accused, hear testimony presented for and against 287 the accused in accordance with the rules of evidence applicable to criminal trials in this Commonwealth. In 288 felony cases, the accused shall not be called upon to plead, but he may cross-examine any witness who 289 testifies on behalf of the Commonwealth or on behalf of any other defendant, introduce witnesses in his own 290 behalf, and testify in his own behalf.

291 C. A judge may adjourn a trial, pending before him, not exceeding 10 days at one time, without the 292 consent of the accused. A judge may, for an offense that he does not have jurisdiction to try and with the 293 consent of the accused and the attorney for the Commonwealth, delay a proceeding in order for the accused 294 to complete a specialty docket established pursuant to § 18.2-254.2 or a behavioral health docket established 295 pursuant to § 18.2-254.3. However, if the accused fails to complete such specialty docket or behavioral 296 health docket, the court shall proceed pursuant to this section and § 19.2-186.

297 D. At any preliminary hearing under this section, certificates of analysis and reports prepared pursuant to 298 §§ 19.2-187 and 19.2-188 shall be admissible without the testimony of the person preparing such certificate 299 or report. 300

§ 19.2-186. When accused to be discharged, tried, committed or bailed by judge.

301 The judge shall discharge the accused if he considers that there is not sufficient cause for charging him 302 with the offense.

303 If a judge considers that there is sufficient cause only to charge the accused with an offense which the 304 judge has jurisdiction to try, then he shall try the accused for such offense and convict him if he deems him

- 305 guilty and pass judgment upon him in accordance with law just as if the accused had first been brought before 306 him on a warrant charging him with such offense.
- If a judge considers that there is sufficient cause to charge the accused with an offense that he does not 307 have jurisdiction to try then he shall certify the case to the appropriate court having jurisdiction and shall 308
- 309 commit the accused to jail or let him to bail pursuant to the provisions of Article 1 (§ 19.2-119 et seq.) of
- Chapter 9 of this title. However, a judge may, for an offense that he does not have jurisdiction to try and with 310
- the consent of the accused and the attorney for the Commonwealth, delay a proceeding under this section in 311
- order for the accused to complete a specialty docket established pursuant to § 18.2-254.2 or a behavioral 312
- docket or behavioral health docket, the court shall proceed pursuant to § 19.2-183 and this section. 314
- health docket established pursuant to § 18.2-254.3. However, if the accused fails to complete such specialty 313