

**Department of Planning and Budget
2026 General Assembly Session
State Fiscal Impact Statement**

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ORIGINAL

Bill Number: HB435

Patron: LeVere Bolling

Bill Title: Palliative Care Info. & Ed. Prog. & Palliative Care & Quality of Life Advisory Council; established.

Bill Summary: Directs the Board of Health to include in its regulations a requirement that every hospital, nursing home, and certified nursing facility licensed by the Board (i) establish a system for identifying patients or residents who may benefit from palliative care and (ii) provide information about and facilitate access to appropriate palliative care services for patients or residents experiencing illness, injuries, or conditions that substantially affect quality of life for more than a short period of time. The bill also directs the Department of Health to establish a palliative care consumer and professional information and education program to maximize the effectiveness of palliative care initiatives in the Commonwealth by (a) ensuring that comprehensive and accurate information and education about palliative care is available to the public, health care providers, and health care facilities and (b) implementing such other initiatives related to education about palliative care and the delivery of palliative care services as may be necessary to educate health care professionals and the public about palliative care. The bill further establishes the Palliative Care and Quality of Life Advisory Council to advise the Department on matters related to the establishment, operation, maintenance, and outcomes evaluations of such initiatives. The bill directs the Palliative Care and Quality of Life Advisory Council to study the possibility of establishing a Medicaid benefit for palliative care and the need for a licensure scheme for palliative care providers. The bill further directs the Board of Health to develop a statewide advanced care planning campaign to increase public awareness of available palliative care options.

Budget Amendment Necessary: Yes

Items Impacted: 279

Explanation: The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) will require additional general fund appropriation to comply with the provisions of this legislation, attributable to Item 279 (Health Research, Planning, and Coordination).

Fiscal Summary: VDH would need additional resources to establish a Palliative Care Consumer and Professional Education and Information Program. It is assumed that minimal adherence to the provisions for the administration of the Palliative Care and Quality of Life Advisory Council can be achieved within existing agency resources. However, additional funding is needed to generate the required study and public awareness campaign.

General Fund Expenditure Impact:

<u>Agency</u>	<u>FY2026</u>	<u>FY2027</u>	<u>FY2028</u>	<u>FY2029</u>	<u>FY2030</u>	<u>FY2031</u>
VDH (601)	-	\$570,506	\$120,506	\$120,506	\$120,506	\$120,506

Fiscal Analysis: The provisions of this legislation establish a Palliative Care Consumer and Professional Education and Information Program. The Office of Licensure and Certification (OLC) will be responsible for ensuring that comprehensive and accurate information and education about palliative care is available to the

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public, health care providers, and health care facilities. Additionally, OLC will develop and implement such other initiatives related to education about palliative care and the delivery of palliative care services as may be necessary to educate health care professionals and the public about palliative care. VDH would require a position to establish and administer the Program, meet publishing requirements, and assist the Board of Health develop a statewide advanced care planning campaign. Costs for this position, including salary and fringe, are estimated to be \$120,506.

The bill also requires the Palliative Care and Quality of Life Advisory Council to study (i) the possibility of establishing a high-quality and fiscally sustainable Medicaid benefit for palliative care and (ii) the need for a licensure scheme for palliative care providers. This study must be completed by November 1, 2026. These provisions would require effort and knowledge that is not available within existing agency resources. It is assumed that VDH would need to hire a vendor to develop a Medicaid benefit and licensure scheme for palliative care. Based on the experience of other agencies with similar efforts, it is estimated that approximately \$400,000 general fund would be required in FY 2027 to procure the expertise and provide the expected deliverables within the timeframe required in the bill.

The cost to develop a statewide advanced care planning campaign to increase public awareness of available in-person and virtual palliative care options can range based on expected outcomes and available resources. For the purposes of this statement, it is assumed that VDH would require at least \$50,000 general fund to develop a one-time campaign in FY 2027.

With the exception of the aforementioned study and campaign, it is expected that VDH would be able to absorb the costs of providing minimal administrative functions for the Advisory Council. It is assumed that the position outlined above would be able to assist the Council should VDH's participation be necessary. The members of the Council are not to receive compensation per the provisions of the bill but do receive reimbursement for expenses incurred in performance of duties. Costs to provide council reimbursement can be absorbed within existing resources.

Other: None