JLARC
JOINT LEGISLATIVE AUDIT AND REVIEW COMMISSION

Study Resolution

Virginia's Health Regulatory Boards

Authorized by the Commission on November 9, 2026

WHEREAS, the Department of Health Professions and its health regulatory boards aim to ensure safe and competent care by licensing health professionals and enforcing standards of practice, including in medicine, nursing, pharmacy, dentistry, counseling, and social work; and

WHEREAS, the 13 health regulatory boards establish qualifications for regulated health professions and issue licenses to qualified applicants, and regulate certain facilities, including pharmacies, funeral facilities, veterinary establishments, and dental sedation locations; and

WHEREAS, the health regulatory boards maintained 522,402 active licenses as of June 30, 2026, and issued 62,016 new licenses in FY26; and

WHEREAS, the Department investigates complaints against practitioners, and health regulatory boards hear disciplinary cases and impose a range of sanctions; and

WHEREAS, the Department employs 328 full-time equivalent staff and operates with a non-general fund budget of $53.2 million (FY27); and

WHEREAS, the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) last reviewed Virginia's health regulatory boards in 1999; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission that staff be directed to review the performance of the Department of Health Professions and Virginia's health regulatory boards in licensing and regulating health professionals to help ensure safe and competent patient care. In conducting its review, staff shall assess whether (i) licensure requirements, processes, and pathways ensure that practitioners are qualified without creating unnecessary barriers to entering or remaining in a profession, particularly for professions experiencing workforce shortages; (ii) the processes for receiving, investigating, and resolving complaints are timely, effective, and fair to complainants and practitioners; (iii) inspections of regulated facilities are timely and effective; (iv) the composition and governance of the health regulatory boards support effective regulation; and (v) the General Assembly receives sufficient information to effectively evaluate proposed changes to health professions' scopes of practice, especially those disputed among professions.

JLARC shall make recommendations as necessary and review other issues as warranted.

All agencies of the Commonwealth, including the Virginia Department of Health Professions and its regulatory boards, shall provide assistance, information, and data to JLARC for this study, upon request. JLARC staff shall have access to all information in the possession of agencies pursuant to § 30-59 and § 30-69 of the Code of Virginia, including all documents related to disciplinary proceedings or actions of the boards. No provision of the Code of Virginia shall be interpreted as limiting or restricting the access of JLARC staff to information pursuant to its statutory authority.