

Legal Assistance Resource Center

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Testimony submitted to the Human Services Committee in support of RB 408, An Act Concerning Mental Health Options for Medicaid Recipients

by Jane McNichol, Executive Director

March 11, 2014

I am Jane McNichol, Executive Director of the Legal Assistance Resource Center of Connecticut, the advocacy and support center for legal services programs in the state. We represent the interests of very-low income residents of the state.

I write to express our support for RB 408, AAC Mental Health Options for Medicaid Recipients, and for the proposal from the National Association of Social Workers/Connecticut to add Licensed Clinical Social Workers as Medicaid providers.

This bill, with the proposed amendment, would require the Department of Social Services to include services provided by licensed psychologists and licensed clinical social workers (LCSW) as covered services for individuals enrolled in HUSKY C and D. Currently, the services of LCSWs are covered for individuals enrolled in HUSKY A and B.

HUSKY C is the Medicaid program that provides health care coverage for very low-income adults who are elderly or disabled. HUSKY D covers non-parenting adults with incomes up to 138% of the federal poverty level, substantially higher than the income eligibility level for HUSKY C. HUSKY D is the Medicaid expansion group. As a result of the recent changes in federal law, the number of individuals participating in HUSKY D has risen substantially and is expected to continue to rise.

In order to assure a robust provider network for HUSKY C and D participants needing behavioral health services, we need to expand the pool of providers eligible to receive support from the Medicaid program. Legal Services advocates who help clients access needed health care report difficulty in finding enough providers in the community who will accept Medicaid. This bill would open up provider networks with practitioners who are willing to accept Medicaid payments but are currently barred from doing so.

It would provide needed tools as we work to take advantage of the opportunities available under the Affordable Care Act to provide adequate, affordable health care to all Connecticut residents.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.