



*Testimony before the Insurance and Real Estate Committee  
Roderick L. Bremby, Commissioner  
March 3, 2015*

Good afternoon, Senator Crisco, Representative Megna and distinguished members of the Insurance and Real Estate Committee. My name is Roderick Bremby and I am the Commissioner of the Department of Social Services. I am pleased to be before you today to testify on the Governor's bill, **HB 6847 AN ACT ENHANCING ACCESS TO BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES AND SERVICES FOR YOUTHS WITH AUSTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER.**

This proposal seeks to enhance access to behavioral health services and services for youth with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) by expanding commercial coverage for ASD services, improving quality and consistency in therapies across payers, clarifying the clinical review for substance use disorder, and developing behavior health utilization and quality measures data across payers.

As of January 1, 2015, the Connecticut Department of Social Services, working in close collaboration with the Department of Developmental Services (DDS), the lead state agency for ASD, implemented comprehensive coverage for the evaluation and treatment of ASD for Medicaid members under the age of 21 based on July 2014 guidance from the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). DSS and DDS also have engaged with various other state agency partners throughout this process. There was considerable stakeholder involvement prior to the implementation of these services, including a detailed presentation and multiple meetings with the Autism Spectrum Disorder Advisory Council. The stakeholder involvement is ongoing with feedback provided on both DSS' pending regulations and Medicaid state plan amendment.

Under this coverage, Medicaid members under the age of 21 may receive a wide variety of medically necessary ASD services that are carefully tailored to meet their unique needs in accordance with a behavioral plan of care.

In addition to medically necessary ASD services for individuals under the age of 21, DSS also provides care coordination through the Medicaid program's behavioral health administrative services organization (ASO), which is available to Medicaid members regardless of age.

As HB 6847 seeks to align commercial insurance with Medicaid coverage of autism spectrum disorder, the Department would like to identify two keys ways this bill assists with such alignment.

- The proposal expands coverage of ASD services to individuals up to age 21, reflecting Medicaid's current coverage range.

- This proposal seeks to refine the definition of behavioral therapy (which includes applied behavior analysis (ABA) services) consistent with the services and interventions designated by a subcommittee of the Autism Spectrum Disorder Advisory Council and DDS, paralleling the Department's approach to Medicaid coverage, which it has defined in close collaboration with DDS.
- This proposal also removes the dollar caps on value of services, similar to the Department's ASD coverage, which does not have any dollar caps on services.

The Department is also pleased with the opportunity to collaborate in a workgroup setting to assist in developing uniform behavioral utilization and quality measures data across payers.

For these reasons, the Department is in support of this bill.