AN ACT CONCERNING REGIONAL BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ACTION ORGANIZATIONS.

SUMMARY

In 2017 and 2018, the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) reorganized existing Regional Action Councils (focused on substance abuse prevention) and Regional Mental Health Boards. DMHAS replaced them with five Regional Behavioral Health Action Organizations (RBHAOs), one for each of the state’s designated mental health regions.

This bill establishes these RBHAOs in statute. It requires them to work across the behavioral health care continuum as strategic community partners to plan, educate, and advocate for their region’s behavioral health needs and services. It sets forth certain specific duties, such as administering grants to municipalities for substance abuse prevention activities.

The bill also requires DMHAS to study the efficacy of these organizations, including evaluating their services and making related recommendations. The DMHAS commissioner must report the study’s findings to the Public Health Committee by January 1, 2020.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

REGIONAL BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ACTION ORGANIZATIONS

The bill requires each RBHAO to fulfill the following duties within its mental health region:

1. assess the behavioral health needs of children, adolescents, and adults;

2. develop strategic plans with priority recommendations for
substance abuse prevention, treatment, and recovery services;

3. administer grants to municipalities to stimulate the development and implementation of substance abuse prevention activities;

4. build local communities’ capacity to understand and address problem gambling;

5. raise awareness and provide advocacy to the public related to mental health promotion and substance abuse prevention, treatment, and recovery;

6. leverage funds to support substance abuse prevention, treatment, and recovery activities;

7. serve on local, regional, and statewide advisory and planning bodies; and

8. within available appropriations, provide training in administering opioid antagonists (e.g., Narcan) and distribute opioid antagonists to communities.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Public Health Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 24  Nay 1  (03/29/2019)