



House Bill No. 5597

Public Act No. 21-113

AN ACT CONCERNING OPIOIDS.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2021*) (a) As used in this section:

(1) "Commissioner" means the Commissioner of Mental Health and Addiction Services;

(2) "Department" means the "Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services;

(3) "Opioid use disorder" means a medical condition characterized by a problematic pattern of opioid use and misuse leading to clinically significant impairment or distress; and

(4) "Peer navigator" means a person who (A) has experience working with persons with substance use disorder, as defined in section 20-74 of the general statutes, (B) provides nonmedical mental health care and substance use services to such persons, and (C) has a collaborative relationship with a health care professional authorized to prescribe medications to treat opioid use disorder.

(b) On or before January 1, 2022, the department shall establish, within available appropriations, a pilot program in urban, suburban

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and rural communities to serve persons with opioid use disorder in such communities. The department shall establish the pilot program in up to five such communities in accordance with such terms and conditions as the commissioner may prescribe.

(c) Each community in which the pilot program is established under subsection (b) of this section shall form a team of at least two peer navigators. The team shall work in the community to (1) increase engagement between providers of treatment services, health care and social services and persons with opioid use disorder, (2) improve the retention of such persons in treatment for opioid use disorder by addressing social determinants of health of such persons and emerging local conditions that affect such social determinants of health, and (3) increase the capacity of the community to support such persons by identifying and addressing systemic barriers to treatment services, health care, social services and social support of such persons. The team shall (A) travel throughout the community to address, in person, the health care and social needs of persons with opioid use disorder, and (B) be accessible to such persons through (i) a telephone number that has texting capabilities, and (ii) social media. Each peer navigator that participates in the pilot program shall receive regularly updated training, as determined by the commissioner, on noncoercive and nonstigmatizing methods for engaging those with opioid use disorder.

(d) On or before January 1, 2023, the commissioner shall report, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes, to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to public health regarding the success of the pilot program in serving persons with opioid use disorder and any recommendations for continuing the pilot program or expanding the pilot program into other communities in the state.

Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2021*) On or before January 1, 2022, the Commissioner of Public Health shall (1) establish guidelines for the use

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of evidence-based, nonpharmaceutical therapies to treat chronic pain, including, but not limited to, chiropractic treatment and physical therapy, and (2) conduct educational and outreach activities to raise awareness of such guidelines.

Approved July 6, 2021