



General Assembly

January Session, 2021

Raised Bill No. 979

LCO No. 4266



Referred to Committee on HUMAN SERVICES

Introduced by:
(HS)

***AN ACT EXPANDING ACCESS TO MEDICAL SPECIALISTS FOR
MEDICAID BENEFICIARIES IN SOUTHEASTERN CONNECTICUT.***

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

1 Section 1. Section 17b-245e of the general statutes is repealed and the
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

3 (a) For purposes of this section: (1) "Commissioner" means the
4 Commissioner of Social Services; (2) "department" means the
5 Department of Social Services; and (3) "telehealth" has the same
6 meaning as provided in section 19a-906.

7 (b) The department shall provide coverage under the Medicaid
8 program for telehealth services for categories of health care services that
9 the commissioner determines are (1) clinically appropriate to be
10 provided by means of telehealth, (2) cost effective for the state, and (3)
11 likely to expand access to medically necessary services where there is a
12 clinical need for those services to be provided by telehealth or for
13 Medicaid recipients for whom accessing appropriate health care
14 services poses an undue hardship. Not later than July 1, 2021, the
15 commissioner shall develop a plan to increase access to medical

16 specialists in the southeastern part of the state, including, but not limited
17 to, New London County, by expanding telehealth services. The
18 commissioner shall implement such plan not later than September 1,
19 2021. The commissioner may provide coverage of telehealth services
20 pursuant to this section notwithstanding any provision of the
21 regulations of Connecticut state agencies that would otherwise prohibit
22 coverage of telehealth services. [The commissioner may implement
23 policies and procedures as necessary to carry out the provisions of this
24 section while in the process of adopting the policies and procedures as
25 regulations, provided notice of intent to adopt the regulations is
26 published in accordance with the provisions of section 17b-10.]

27 (c) The commissioner shall seek any federal waiver or amend the
28 Medicaid state plan as necessary to attempt to secure federal
29 reimbursement for the costs of providing such coverage under the
30 Medicaid program. An application for such waiver or proposed
31 amendment to the Medicaid state plan shall be submitted to the joint
32 standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of
33 matters relating to human services and appropriations and the budgets
34 of state agencies as required under the provisions of section 17b-8.

35 (d) Not later than [August 1, 2020] January 1, 2022, the commissioner
36 shall submit a report, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a,
37 to the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having
38 cognizance of matters relating to human services and public health on
39 [(1) the categories of health care services in which the department is
40 utilizing telehealth services, (2) in what cities or regions of the state such
41 services are being offered, and (3) any cost savings realized by the state
42 by providing telehealth services] implementation of the plan to expand
43 access to medical specialists in the southeastern part of the state.

44 (e) The commissioner may implement policies and procedures as
45 necessary to carry out the provisions of this section while in the process
46 of adopting the policies and procedures in regulation form, provided
47 notice of intent to adopt the regulations is published in accordance with
48 the provisions of section 17b-10.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>from passage</i>	17b-245e

Statement of Purpose:

To require the Commissioner of Social Services to expand access to medical specialists in southeastern Connecticut by expanding telehealth services.

[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]