

Insurance and Real Estate Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-6588

AN ACT CONCERNING MENTAL HEALTH CARE AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Title: SERVICES.

Vote Date: 3/22/2021

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/9/2021

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Insurance and Real Estate Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

The bill seeks to prevent the abuse and misuse, or prescriptive medication practices as 90-day dispensing has been a harmful practice for consumers. The bill also establishes two tasks force to understand the role of provider networks and peer support services in Connecticut.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None expressed.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Claire Bien, Hamden, CT supports the bill regarding forming a task force on peer support. Having a support group to openly discuss mental health has had a great impact on her life.

Thomas Burr, Community & Affiliates Relations Manager, NAMI Connecticut supports the bill. He firmly believes that if his son had peer services in his life his path to recovery would have been shorter and less expensive to the State of Connecticut. Peer support is an essential role in a health care team and if CT wants to make that happen it needs to make Certifies Peer Recovery Specialists reimbursable.

Suzi Craig, Registered Lobbyist, Chief Strategy Officer, Mental Health Connecticut supports the bill as peer support is an essential role on health care teams to support the recovery process.

Carol Cruz, Milford, CT supports the bill as peer support is an essential role on health care teams to support the recovery process.

Connecticut Hospital Association supports the establishment of a task force to study health insurance coverage for peer support services. The bill provides for the appointment of a representative of CHA to serve on the task force and they welcome the opportunity to engage in this work as drug overdose continues to endanger the lives of many citizens.

Marcia DuFore, Amplify Inc. supports the bill as peer support is an essential role on health care teams to support the recovery process. In an experience with a close friend she explains the lack of resources and support there was and how lives are lost without it.

Hilary Felton-Reid, Connecticut Association of Health Plans offered comments on the bill. CTAHP supports efforts to minimize and prevent medication misuse and abuse however each patient responds to treatment differently. Prescriptive treatment and coverage requirements laid out in statute impeded the ability of carriers and clinicians to adapt treatment protocols in line with clinical appropriateness. Urged caution in adopting a one-size fits all policy. With costs of pharmaceuticals rising, it is irresponsible and not in the interest of the consumer to prohibit the ability of carriers to manage cost. Lastly should the legislature choose to move forward with the task's forces, CTAHP request a seat at the table.

Michaela L. Fissel, Executive Director, Advocacy Unlimited supports the bill and offered some suggestions. She asked for a seat for Advocacy Unlimited and one for the Connecticut Community for Addiction Recovery. These organizations have had the longest standing experience with training and educating peer specialists. She also asked for an additional seat for a person who is working in peer services as a Certified Peer Recovery Specialist and to replace the representative of the Department of Children and Families with a representative of the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services.

Diane Frost, RSS, MSW, Stamford, CT supports the bill and from her experience as a mental health professional she acknowledged the importance of the bill.

Robert Goethals, New Haven, CT supports the bill as peer support is an essential role on health care teams to support the recovery process.

Nicole Hampton, Certified Peer Recovery Specialist, Recovery Coach Professional supports the bill as establishing a task force would elevate and formalized the discussion at a state level. If we are to increase pathways to peer workforce Certified Peer Recover Specialists need to be reimbursable.

Danielle Morgan, MSN, CNS, Family PMHNP, APRN-BC, supports the bill as it provides support for the prescribing providers' medical decision making while outweighing the 90-day convenience of health insurers. The appreciation for the complexity of psychiatric care is lost with patients when inappropriate 90-day dispensing is encouraged. This can lead to non-compliance, treatment failure, poor outcomes and illness that never reaches remission.

Gisela Pena, Hamden, CT supports the bill from personal experience in her own recovery process, she has had much success with her Certified Peer Recover coach. She urged that health insurance be inclusive of certified peer support services.

Theo Pinnow, RSS, Naugatuck, CT supports the bill as peer support services is an essential role in the mental healthcare system. As a recovery support specialist himself he has witnessed the importance of the role on the individuals.

Jeffrey Santo, Norwalk, CT supports the bill as it is necessary for the future of CT residents. It will not only help fill the gaps in current mental health and addiction services but allow for new ideas and practices to be brought to the table.

Ben Shaiken, Manager of Advocacy & Public Policy, CT Community Nonprofit Alliance supports the bill as research shows that peer support services are effective at treating mental health conditions and helping people recover from addiction.

David Watson, Monroe, CT supports the bill as it will be a powerful tool and resource for communities. He recommends that there should be strong representation of the peer support community on the task force to mitigate any misinformation.

Margaret Watt, Norwalk, CT supports the bill as peer support specialists can bridge the gaps in mental health in an effective manner. Peer Support specialists are important and have made a big contribution to individuals' recovery.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None Expressed.

Reported by: Christina Cruz

Date: 04/05/2021