



PA 21-36—HB 5677

Public Health Committee

AN ACT CONCERNING THE AVAILABILITY OF COMMUNITY VIOLENCE PREVENTION SERVICES UNDER MEDICAID

SUMMARY: This act requires the Department of Social Services (DSS) commissioner to amend the state Medicaid plan to provide coverage for community violence prevention services for beneficiaries who meet both of the following criteria. First, they have received medical treatment for an injury sustained from an act of community violence (i.e., an intentional act of interpersonal violence committed in public by someone who is not the victim’s family member or intimate partner). Second, they have also been referred by a certified or licensed health care provider or social services provider to receive these services from a “certified violence prevention professional” after the provider determined the beneficiary is at a higher risk of retaliation or a violent injury from another act of community violence.

Under the act, the DSS commissioner must do this by July 1, 2022, so long as (1) federal law permits it; (2) federal financial participation is available; and (3) any needed federal approval is obtained, including Medicaid waivers or state plan amendments.

Additionally, the act establishes training requirements for individuals seeking certification as a “certified violence prevention professional” and requires the Department of Public Health (DPH), by January 1, 2022, to approve at least one accredited training and certification program for these professionals. It also establishes documentation and compliance requirements for entities that employ or contract with these professionals to provide community violence prevention services.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2021

COMMUNITY VIOLENCE PREVENTION SERVICES

The act defines “community violence prevention services” as evidenced-based, trauma-informed, supportive, and non-psychotherapeutic services provided by a certified violence prevention professional to:

1. promote improved health outcomes and positive behavioral change,
2. prevent injury recidivism, and
3. reduce the likelihood that victims of community violence will commit or promote violence themselves.

Under the act, these services may be provided within or outside of a clinical setting and may include the provision of the following services to community violence victims: peer support or counseling, mentorship, conflict mediation, crisis intervention, targeted case management, referrals to certified or licensed

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health care or social services providers, patient education, or screening services.

CERTIFIED VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROFESSIONALS

Training Requirements

Under the act, a prevention professional (see BACKGROUND) seeking certification as a certified violence prevention professional must complete a DPH-approved, accredited training and certification program and maintain the certification.

Training and Certification Program

The act requires DPH, by January 1, 2022, to approve at least one accredited training and certification program for certified violence prevention professionals. The program must include at least 35 hours of initial training and address:

1. the profound effects of trauma and violence and the basics of trauma-informed care;
2. community violence prevention strategies, including conflict mediation and retaliation prevention;
3. case management and advocacy practices; and
4. HIPAA's patient privacy requirements.

Under the act, the program must also include six hours of continuing education every two years.

Documentation and Compliance

The act requires any entity that employs or contracts with a certified violence prevention professional to provide community violence prevention services to:

1. maintain documentation that the professional has met the qualifications listed above and
2. ensure that the professional complies with any applicable state or federal laws, regulations, rules, or standards of care.

The act also specifies that it does not alter any health care professional's scope of practice.

Title Protection

The act prohibits anyone who is not certified as a violence prevention professional under the act's requirements from using the title "certified violence prevention professional" or any title, words, letters, abbreviations, or insignia indicating or implying that he or she is a certified violence prevention professional.

BACKGROUND

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Prevention Professionals

Prevention professionals work in programs that address specific patient needs, such as suicide prevention, violence prevention, alcohol and drug avoidance, and tobacco prevention. They generally complete training specific to the patient population they work with and work in a variety of settings providing various services such as case management, provider referral, and mentorship.