

Human Services Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-5370

AN ACT CONCERNING MEDICAL ASSISTANCE FOR ROOM AND BOARD

Title: COSTS FOR SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT IN A RESIDENTIAL SETTING.

Vote Date: 3/19/2024

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute Change of Reference to Appropriations

PH Date: 3/7/2024

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Human Services Committee

CO-SPONSORS of BILL:

Rep. Gary Turco, 27th Dist.

REASONS FOR BILL:

According to the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH), there were 1,340 overdose-related deaths in Connecticut in 2023. DPH now states that residents are more likely to die from unintended drug overdose than a motor vehicle accident. By supporting the expansion of the Medicaid 1115 waiver to cover room and board costs at residential treatment centers (which are different than inpatient treatment facilities), more individuals will be able to access the critical care needed for substance use disorder recovery without being turned away based on lack of coverage for room and board.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Department of Social Services (DSS), Commissioner, Andrea Barton Reeves; opposes this bill stating that it will have a fiscal impact on DSS and does not align with the current approval structure for substance use disorder (SUD) services. It is stated that currently, the state covers room and board costs for non-hospital residential SUD treatment to the extent available in the state budget. However, it is stated a willing and qualified provider can provide SUD residential treatment, but there is no guarantee of reimbursement for the room and board costs.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Connecticut General Assembly, State Representative, Gary Turco; supports this bill stating it will be a source of additional funding for addiction recovery efforts. It is stated that The Root Center for Advanced Recovery operates in New Britain and other towns around the state and is preparing to open a 16-bed residential treatment facility, however, they would be ineligible for reimbursement as it is a new residential facility. It is stated that passage of this bill would expand the waiver to allow new residential facilities to receive reimbursement.

The Connecticut Community Nonprofit Alliance (The Alliance), Public Policy and Advocacy Associate, Monika Nugent; supports this bill but has concerns that allowing certain organizations, including for-profit organizations, that provide inpatient treatment services would come at the expense of taking money away from existing organizations under the 1115 waiver. It is suggested that expanding the 1115 waiver to bring in more residential providers under the waiver rather than finding additional funding and separating funding based on provider type.

High Focus Treatment Centers (Pyramid Healthcare, Inc.), Vice President of Government Relations, Collan Rosier; supports this bill stating that Pyramid Healthcare operates over 1,800 residential treatment beds in nine other states with none in Connecticut due to the lack of reimbursement of room and board. It is stated they currently have two outpatient treatment centers in Connecticut, one in Norwalk and one in Farmington.

The Root Center for Advanced Recovery, Board Member, Pat Rehmer; supports this bill stating The Root Center is the largest methadone maintenance clinic in the state serving close to 6,000 clients per day across its 11 locations and has established its first residential site in New Britain with the hopes of opening in Fall 2024. It is stated they have concerns about sustainability due to the current language of the 1115 waiver. The current language only allows for current residential treatment beds to be reimbursed, leaving out the new facility that is set to open. It is stated that current policy could discourage other facilities from opening due to the lack of reimbursement for residential treatment room and board.

The Root Center for Advanced Recovery, President and CEO, Steven Zuckerman; supports this bill as it will expand the 1115 waiver to include new residential treatment beds. It is stated that The Root Center estimates that the funding for their facility will amount to \$43.14 per day or to 90% occupancy which would be \$227,000 for the year. It is stated that as the current waiver stands, The Root Center would be able to bill Medicaid for the clinical services but not for residential room and board.

The following individuals have submitted written testimony in support of this bill:

Laura Rinaldi
Ray Rinaldi

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None expressed.

Reported by: Angela Rossi

Date: April 3, 2024

