

1 S.243

2 Introduced by Senators Sirotkin and Ashe

3 Referred to Committee on Health and Welfare

4 Date: January 5, 2016

5 Subject: Health; prescription drugs; physicians; pharmacists; Vermont

6 Prescription Monitoring System; continuing medical education;

7 controlled substances; opioids; buprenorphine

8 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to increase the
9 frequency with which health care providers query the Vermont Prescription
10 Monitoring System when prescribing opioids to their patients. It would require
11 the Commissioners of Health and of Public Safety to establish a statewide
12 prescription drug disposal program. The bill would seek to increase the
13 number of prescribers of buprenorphine to patients with a substance use
14 disorder by encouraging care coordination with primary care providers,
15 establishing a telemedicine pilot program, and requiring insurance
16 reimbursement for certain pill counts conducted by pharmacists. It would also
17 increase the amount of continuing medical education certain physicians must
18 complete on the topic of prescribing controlled substances, including education
19 on the use of complementary and alternative therapies instead of opioid
20 controlled substances in treating chronic pain.

1 An act relating to combating opioid abuse in Vermont

2 It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

3 ~~*** Vermont Prescription Monitoring System ***~~

4 Sec. 1. 18 V.S.A. § 4289 is amended to read:

5 § 4289. STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR HEALTH CARE

6 PROVIDERS AND DISPENSERS

7 (a) Each professional licensing authority for health care providers shall
8 develop evidence-based standards to guide health care providers in the
9 appropriate prescription of Schedules II, III, and IV controlled substances for
10 treatment of chronic pain and for other medical conditions to be determined by
11 the licensing authority. The standards developed by the licensing authorities
12 shall be consistent with rules adopted by the Department of Health.

13 (b)(1) Each health care provider who prescribes any Schedule II, III, or IV
14 controlled substances shall register with the VPMS by November 15, 2013.

15 (2) If the VPMS shows that a patient has filled a prescription for a
16 controlled substance written by a health care provider who is not a registered
17 user of VPMS, the Commissioner of Health shall notify the applicable
18 licensing authority and the provider by mail of the provider's registration
19 requirement pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection. Failure to register
20 with the VPMS may be considered unprofessional conduct under the
21 provider's applicable licensing statutes

1 ~~(3) The Commissioner of Health shall develop additional procedures to~~
2 ensure that all health care providers who prescribe controlled substances are
3 registered in compliance with subdivision (1) of this subsection.

4 (c) Each dispenser who dispenses any Schedule II, III, or IV controlled
5 substances shall register with the VPMS. Failure to register with the VPMS
6 may be considered unprofessional conduct under the dispenser's applicable
7 licensing statutes.

8 (d)(1) Health care providers shall query the VPMS with respect to an
9 individual patient in the following circumstances:

10 ~~(1)(A) at least annually for patients who are receiving ongoing treatment~~
11 ~~with an~~ each time the provider issues a new or renewal prescription for an
12 opioid Schedule II, III, or IV controlled substance to a patient;

13 ~~(2)(B) when starting a patient on a Schedule II, III, or IV non-opioid~~
14 ~~controlled substance for nonpalliative long-term pain therapy of 90 days~~
15 ~~or more;~~

16 ~~(3) the first time the provider prescribes an opioid Schedule II, III, or IV~~
17 ~~controlled substance written to treat chronic pain; and~~

18 ~~(4)(C) prior to writing a replacement prescription for a Schedule II, III,~~
19 ~~or IV controlled substance pursuant to section 4290 of this title.~~

20 (2) Failure to query the VPMS as required by this section and by rules
21 adopted by the Commissioner of Health pursuant to this section may be

1 ~~considered unprofessional conduct under the provider's applicable licensing~~
2 ~~statutes.~~

3 (e) The Commissioner of Health shall, after consultation with the Unified
4 Pain Management System Advisory Council, adopt rules necessary to effect
5 the purposes of this section. The Commissioner and the Council shall consider
6 additional circumstances under which health care providers should be required
7 to query the VPMS, ~~including whether health care providers should be~~
8 ~~required to query the VPMS when a patient requests renewal of a prescription~~
9 ~~for an opioid Schedule II, III, or IV controlled substance written to treat acute~~
10 ~~pain.~~

11 (f)(1) Each professional licensing authority for dispensers shall adopt
12 standards, consistent with rules adopted by the Department of Health under
13 this section, regarding the frequency and circumstances under which its
14 respective licensees shall:

15 ~~(1)(A)~~ query the VPMS; and

16 ~~(2)(B)~~ report to the VPMS, which shall be no less than once every ~~seven~~
17 ~~days~~ 24 hours.

18 (2) Failure to query or report to the VPMS as required by this subsection
19 or rules adopted pursuant to this subsection may be considered unprofessional
20 conduct under the provider's applicable licensing statutes.

1 ~~(g) Each professional licensing authority for health care providers and~~
2 dispensers shall consider the statutory requirements, rules, and standards
3 adopted pursuant to this section in disciplinary proceedings when determining
4 whether a licensee has complied with the applicable standard of care.

5 * * * Unused Drug Disposal Program * * *

6 Sec. 2. STATEWIDE UNUSED PRESCRIPTION DRUG DISPOSAL
7 PROGRAM

8 Safe disposal of unused prescription drugs is an essential part of reducing
9 prescription drug abuse and diversion in Vermont. 2013 Acts and Resolves
10 No. 75, Sec. 16 directed the Commissioners of Health and of Public Safety to
11 make recommendations in January 2014 for a statewide drug disposal program
12 at no charge to the consumer, and to implement the program within six months.
13 The Commissioners provided a report describing options but have not
14 implemented any of them to date. The delay has set back Vermont's efforts to
15 curtail prescription drug abuse and diversion due to unused prescription drugs
16 by as much as two years, and it is of the utmost importance that a program be
17 put in place as soon as possible. The federal government enacted new
18 regulations in 2014 that expanded the opportunities for drug disposal,
19 including allowing for drug disposal at pharmacies and certain other locations.
20 The Commissioners shall implement one or more of the options described in
21 the 2014 report, or develop and implement a new drug disposal model, to be

1 ~~fully operational statewide on or before January 1, 2017. On or before~~
2 October 1, 2016, the Commissioners shall notify the House Committees on
3 Health Care, on Human Services, and on Judiciary, the Senate Committees on
4 Health and Welfare and on Judiciary, and the Health Reform Oversight
5 Committee which model they will implement and their strategy for informing
6 Vermont residents about the new statewide drug disposal program.

7 * * * Expanding Access to Substance Abuse Treatment with
8 Buprenorphine * * *

9 Sec. 3. 18 V.S.A. chapter 93 is amended to read:

10 CHAPTER 93. TREATMENT OF OPIOID ADDICTION

11 Subchapter 1. Regional Opioid Addiction Treatment System

12 § 4751. PURPOSE

13 It is the purpose of this ~~chapter subchapter~~ to authorize the ~~department of~~
14 ~~health~~ Department of Health to establish a regional system of opioid addiction
15 treatment.

16 * * *

17 Subchapter 2. Opioid Addiction Treatment Care Coordination

18 § 4771. CARE COORDINATION

19 (a) In addition to participation in the regional system of opioid addiction
20 treatment established pursuant to subchapter 1 of this chapter, health care
21 providers may coordinate patient care in order to provide to the maximum

1 ~~number of patients high quality opioid addiction treatment with buprenorphine~~
2 ~~or a drug containing buprenorphine.~~

3 ~~(b) Care for patients with opioid addiction may be provided by a care~~
4 ~~coordination team comprising the patient's primary care provider, a qualified~~
5 ~~addiction medicine physician or nurse practitioner as described in subsection~~
6 ~~(c) of this section, and members of a medication-assisted treatment team~~
7 ~~affiliated with the Blueprint for Health.~~

8 ~~(c)(1) A primary care provider participating in the care coordination team~~
9 ~~and prescribing buprenorphine or a drug containing buprenorphine pursuant to~~
10 ~~this section shall meet federal requirements for prescribing buprenorphine or a~~
11 ~~drug containing buprenorphine to treat opioid addiction and shall see the~~
12 ~~patient he or she is treating for opioid addiction for an office visit at least once~~
13 ~~every three months.~~

14 ~~(2) A qualified addiction medicine physician participating in a~~
15 ~~care coordination team pursuant to this section shall be a physician who is~~
16 ~~board-certified in addiction medicine. The qualified physician shall see the~~
17 ~~patient for addiction-related treatment other than the prescription of~~
18 ~~buprenorphine or a drug containing buprenorphine and shall advise the~~
19 ~~patient's primary care physician.~~

20 ~~(3)(A) A qualified addiction medicine nurse practitioner participating in~~
21 ~~a care coordination team pursuant to this section shall be an advanced practice~~

1 ~~registered nurse who is certified as a nurse practitioner and who satisfies one or~~

2 more of the following conditions:

3 (i) has completed not fewer than 24 hours of classroom or
4 interactive training in the treatment and management of opioid-dependent
5 patients for substance use disorders provided by the American Society of
6 Addiction Medicine, the American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry, the
7 American Medical Association, the American Osteopathic Association, the
8 American Psychiatric Association, or any other organization that the
9 Commissioner of Health deems appropriate; or

10 (ii) has such other training and experience as the Commissioner of
11 Health determines will demonstrate the ability of the nurse practitioner to treat
12 and manage opioid dependent patients.

13 (B) The qualified nurse practitioner shall see the patient for
14 addiction-related treatment other than the prescription of buprenorphine or a
15 drug containing buprenorphine and shall advise the patient's primary care
16 physician.

17 (d) The primary care provider, qualified addiction medicine physician or
18 nurse practitioner, and medication-assisted treatment team members shall
19 coordinate the patient's care and shall communicate with one another as often
20 as needed to ensure that the patient receives the highest quality of care.

1 ~~(c) The Director of the Blueprint for Health shall consider increasing~~
2 payments to primary care providers participating in the Blueprint who choose
3 to engage in care coordination by prescribing buprenorphine or a drug
4 containing buprenorphine for patients with opioid addiction pursuant to this
5 section.

6 Sec. 4. TELEMEDICINE FOR TREATMENT OF SUBSTANCE USE
7 DISORDER; PILOT

8 The Green Mountain Care Board and Department of Vermont Health
9 Access shall develop a pilot program to enable a patient taking buprenorphine
10 or a drug containing buprenorphine for a substance use disorder to receive
11 treatment from an addiction medicine specialist delivered through telemedicine
12 at a health care facility that is capable of providing a secure telemedicine
13 connection and whose location is convenient to the patient. The Board and the
14 Department shall ensure that both the specialist and the hosting facility receive
15 appropriate compensation for services rendered. On or before January 15,
16 2017 and annually thereafter, the Board and the Department shall provide a
17 progress report on the pilot program to the House Committees on Health Care
18 and on Human Services and the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare.

1 ~~Sec. 5. 8 V.S.A. § 4089j is amended to read:~~

2 § 4089j. RETAIL PHARMACIES; FILLING OF PRESCRIPTIONS

3 ~~(a) A health insurer and pharmacy benefit manager doing business in~~
4 ~~Vermont shall permit a retail pharmacist licensed under 26 V.S.A. chapter 36~~
5 ~~to fill prescriptions in the same manner and at the same level of reimbursement~~
6 ~~as they are filled by mail order pharmacies with respect to the quantity of drugs~~
7 ~~or days' supply of drugs dispensed under each prescription.~~

8 ~~(b) As used in this section:~~

9 ~~(1) "Health insurer" is defined by 18 V.S.A. § 9402.~~

10 ~~(2) "Pharmacy benefit manager" means an entity that performs~~
11 ~~pharmacy benefit management. "Pharmacy benefit management" means an~~
12 ~~arrangement for the procurement of prescription drugs at negotiated dispensing~~
13 ~~rates, the administration or management of prescription drug benefits provided~~
14 ~~by a health insurance plan for the benefit of beneficiaries, or any of the~~
15 ~~following services provided with regard to the administration of pharmacy~~
16 ~~benefits:~~

17 ~~(A) mail service pharmacy;~~

18 ~~(B) claims processing, retail network management, and payment of~~
19 ~~claims to pharmacies for prescription drugs dispensed to beneficiaries;~~

20 ~~(C) clinical formulary development and management services;~~

21 ~~(D) rebate contracting and administration;~~

1 ~~(E) certain patient compliance, therapeutic intervention, and generic~~
2 substitution programs; and

3 (F) disease management programs.

4 (3) "Health care provider" means a person, partnership, or corporation,
5 other than a facility or institution, that is licensed, certified, or otherwise
6 authorized by law to provide professional health care service in this State to an
7 individual during that individual's medical care, treatment, or confinement.

8 (b) A health insurer and pharmacy benefit manager doing business in
9 Vermont shall permit a retail pharmacist licensed under 26 V.S.A. chapter 36
10 to fill prescriptions in the same manner and at the same level of reimbursement
11 as they are filled by mail order pharmacies with respect to the quantity of drugs
12 or days' supply of drugs dispensed under each prescription.

13 (c) This section shall apply to Medicaid and any other public health care
14 assistance program.

15 (d)(1) A health insurer and pharmacy benefit manager doing business in
16 Vermont shall reimburse a licensed pharmacist or a pharmacy technician under
17 the supervision of a licensed pharmacist for conducting pill counts, pursuant to
18 an order from a health care provider, of opioid controlled substances
19 prescribed by the health care provider to his or her patients. The health insurer
20 or pharmacy benefit manager shall determine the reimbursement amount,
21 which shall be at least \$10.00 per pill count for each prescribed medication

1 ~~counted. The pharmacist or pharmacy technician shall promptly report the~~
2 ~~results of the pill count to the health care provider who ordered it.~~

3 ~~(2) Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to require a licensed~~
4 ~~pharmacist or pharmacy technician to conduct a pill count.~~

5 Sec. 6. BOARD OF PHARMACY; RULEMAKING

6 ~~The Board of Pharmacy, in consultation with the Department of Health,~~
7 ~~shall adopt rules or procedures, or both, as appropriate, to provide guidance to~~
8 ~~licensed pharmacists and pharmacy technicians conducting pill counts of~~
9 ~~controlled substances pursuant to 8 V.S.A. § 4089j(d). The Board's rules or~~
10 ~~procedures, or both, shall take effect on or before July 1, 2017.~~

11 * * * Continuing Medical Education * * *

12 Sec. 7. 26 V.S.A. § 1400(b) is amended to read:

13 (b)(1) A licensee for renewal of an active license to practice medicine shall
14 have completed continuing medical education which shall meet minimum
15 criteria as established by rule, by the ~~board~~ Board, by August 31, 2012 and
16 which shall be in effect for the renewal of licenses to practice medicine
17 expiring after August 31, 2014. The ~~board~~ Board shall require a minimum of
18 10 hours of continuing medical education by rule.

19 (A) At least one hour of continuing medical education for all
20 licensees shall be on the topic of hospice care, palliative care, or pain
21 management services, or a combination of these.

1 ~~(D) At least one hour of continuing medical education for all~~
2 ~~licensees who prescribe controlled substances shall be on the topic of safe and~~
3 ~~effective prescribing of controlled substances. Licensees who prescribe or are~~
4 ~~likely to prescribe opioid controlled substances, as determined by the Board,~~
5 ~~shall complete at least one additional hour of continuing medical education on~~
6 ~~the appropriate use of opioids, including the use of complementary and~~
7 ~~alternative therapies instead of opioid controlled substances to treat chronic~~
8 ~~pain.~~

9 (2) The training provided by the continuing medical education shall be
10 designed to assure that the licensee has updated his or her knowledge and skills
11 in his or her own specialties and also has kept abreast of advances in other
12 fields for which patient referrals may be appropriate. The ~~board~~ Board shall
13 require evidence of current professional competence in recognizing the need
14 for timely appropriate consultations and referrals to assure fully informed
15 patient choice of treatment options, including treatments such as those offered
16 by hospice, palliative care, and pain management services.

17 * * * Effective Dates * * *

18 Sec. 8. EFFECTIVE DATES

19 (a) Secs. 1 (VPMS) and 3 (opioid addiction treatment care coordination)
20 shall take effect on July 1, 2016.

1 ~~(b) Secs. 2 (statewide drug disposal program), 4 (telemedicine pilot),~~

2 6 (Board of Pharmacy; rulemaking), and this section shall take effect on
3 passage.

4 (c) Sec. 5 (pharmacist reimbursement for pill counts) shall take effect on
5 July 1, 2017.

6 (d) Sec. 7 (continuing medical education) shall take effect on passage and
7 shall apply beginning with the licensing period that begins on December 1,
8 2016.

** * * Vermont Prescription Monitoring System * * **

Sec. 1. 18 V.S.A. § 4284 is amended to read:

§ 4284. PROTECTION AND DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION

** * **

(g) Following consultation with the Unified Pain Management System Controlled Substances and Pain Management Advisory Council and an opportunity for input from stakeholders, the Department shall develop a policy that will enable it to use information from VPMS to determine if individual prescribers and dispensers are using VPMS appropriately.

(h) Following consultation with the Unified Pain Management System Controlled Substances and Pain Management Advisory Council and an opportunity for input from stakeholders, the Department shall develop a policy that will enable it to evaluate the prescription of regulated drugs by prescribers.

** * **

Sec. 2. 18 V.S.A. § 4289 is amended to read:

§ 4289. STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS AND DISPENSERS

(a) Each professional licensing authority for health care providers shall develop evidence-based standards to guide health care providers in the appropriate prescription of Schedules II, III, and IV controlled substances for treatment of acute pain, chronic pain and for other medical conditions to be determined by the licensing authority. The standards developed by the

licensing authorities shall be consistent with rules adopted by the Department of Health. The licensing authorities shall submit their standards to the Commissioner of Health, who shall review for consistency across health care providers and notify the applicable licensing authority of any inconsistencies identified.

(b)(1) Each health care provider who prescribes any Schedule II, III, or IV controlled substances shall register with the VPMS by November 15, 2013.

(2) If the VPMS shows that a patient has filled a prescription for a controlled substance written by a health care provider who is not a registered user of VPMS, the Commissioner of Health shall notify the applicable licensing authority and the provider by mail of the provider's registration requirement pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection.

(3) The Commissioner of Health shall develop additional procedures to ensure that all health care providers who prescribe controlled substances are registered in compliance with subdivision (1) of this subsection.

(c) Each dispenser who dispenses any Schedule II, III, or IV controlled substances shall register with the VPMS and shall query the VPMS in accordance with rules adopted by the Commissioner of Health.

(d) ~~Health~~ Except in the event of electronic or technological failure, health care providers shall query the VPMS with respect to an individual patient in the following circumstances:

(1) at least annually for patients who are receiving ongoing treatment with an opioid Schedule II, III, or IV controlled substance;

(2) when starting a patient on a Schedule II, III, or IV controlled substance for nonpalliative long-term pain therapy of 90 days or more;

(3) the first time the provider prescribes an opioid Schedule II, III, or IV controlled substance written to treat chronic pain; and

(4) prior to writing a replacement prescription for a Schedule II, III, or IV controlled substance pursuant to section 4290 of this title.

(e) The Commissioner of Health shall, after consultation with the ~~Unified Pain Management System~~ Controlled Substances and Pain Management Advisory Council, adopt rules necessary to effect the purposes of this section. The Commissioner and the Council shall consider additional circumstances under which health care providers should be required to query the VPMS, including whether health care providers should be required to query the VPMS prior to writing a prescription for any opioid Schedule II, III, or IV controlled substance or when a patient requests renewal of a prescription for an opioid

Schedule II, III, or IV controlled substance written to treat acute pain, and the Commissioner may adopt rules accordingly.

(f)(1) Each professional licensing authority for dispensers shall adopt standards, consistent with rules adopted by the Department of Health under this section, regarding the frequency and circumstances under which its respective licensees shall:

(1) query the VPMS; and,

(2) report to the VPMS, which shall be no less than once every seven days. Pharmacies and other dispensers shall report each dispensed prescription for a Schedule II, III, or IV controlled substance to the VPMS within 24 hours or one business day after dispensing.

(g) Each professional licensing authority for health care providers and dispensers shall consider the statutory requirements, rules, and standards adopted pursuant to this section in disciplinary proceedings when determining whether a licensee has complied with the applicable standard of care.

*** Expanding Access to Substance Abuse Treatment
with Buprenorphine ***

Sec. 3. 18 V.S.A. chapter 93 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 93. TREATMENT OF OPIOID ADDICTION

~~Subchapter 1. Regional Opioid Addiction Treatment System~~

~~§ 4751. PURPOSE~~

~~It is the purpose of this chapter subchapter to authorize the department of health Department of Health to establish a regional system of opioid addiction treatment.~~

~~***~~

Subchapter 1. Regional Opioid Addiction Treatment System

§ 4751. PURPOSE

It is the purpose of this chapter subchapter to authorize the department of health Departments of Health and of Vermont Health Access to establish a regional system of opioid addiction treatment.

§ 4752. OPIOID ADDICTION TREATMENT SYSTEM

(a) The department of health Departments of Health and of Vermont Health Access shall establish by rule a regional system of opioid addiction treatment.

~~(c) No later than January 15 of each year from 2013 through 2016, inclusive, the commissioner shall report to the house committees on human services and on health care and the senate committee on health and welfare regarding the regional system of opioid addiction treatment, including the system's effectiveness. [Repealed.]~~

Subchapter 2. Opioid Addiction Treatment Care Coordination

§ 4771. CARE COORDINATION

~~(a) In addition to participation in the regional system of opioid addiction treatment established pursuant to subchapter 1 of this chapter, health care providers may coordinate patient care in order to provide to the maximum number of patients high quality opioid addiction treatment with buprenorphine or a drug containing buprenorphine.~~

~~(b) Care for patients with opioid addiction may be provided by a care coordination team comprising the patient's primary care provider, a qualified addiction medicine physician or nurse practitioner as described in subsection (c) of this section, and members of a medication-assisted treatment team affiliated with the Blueprint for Health.~~

~~(c)(1) A primary care provider participating in the care coordination team and prescribing buprenorphine or a drug containing buprenorphine pursuant to this section shall meet federal requirements for prescribing buprenorphine or a drug containing buprenorphine to treat opioid addiction and shall see the patient he or she is treating for opioid addiction for an office visit at least once every three months.~~

~~(2)(A) A qualified addiction medicine physician participating in a care coordination team pursuant to this section shall be a physician who is board-certified in addiction medicine or satisfies one or more of the following conditions:~~

~~(i) has completed not fewer than 24 hours of classroom or interactive training in the treatment and management of opioid-dependent patients for substance use disorders provided by the American Society of Addiction Medicine, the American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry, the American Medical Association, the American Osteopathic Association, the American Psychiatric Association, or any other organization that the Commissioner of Health deems appropriate; or~~

~~(ii) has such other training and experience as the Commissioner of Health determines will demonstrate the ability of the physician to treat and manage opioid dependent patients.~~

(B) The qualified physician shall see the patient for addiction-related treatment other than the prescription of buprenorphine or a drug containing buprenorphine and shall advise the patient's primary care physician.

(3)(A) A qualified addiction medicine nurse practitioner participating in a care coordination team pursuant to this section shall be an advanced practice registered nurse who is certified as a nurse practitioner and who satisfies one or more of the following conditions:

(i) has completed not fewer than 24 hours of classroom or interactive training in the treatment and management of opioid-dependent patients for substance use disorders provided by the American Society of Addiction Medicine, the American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry, the American Medical Association, the American Osteopathic Association, the American Psychiatric Association, or any other organization that the Commissioner of Health deems appropriate; or

(ii) has such other training and experience as the Commissioner of Health determines will demonstrate the ability of the nurse practitioner to treat and manage opioid dependent patients.

(B) The qualified nurse practitioner shall see the patient for addiction-related treatment other than the prescription of buprenorphine or a drug containing buprenorphine and shall advise the patient's primary care physician.

(d) The primary care provider, qualified addiction medicine physician or nurse practitioner, and medication-assisted treatment team members shall coordinate the patient's care and shall communicate with one another as often as needed to ensure that the patient receives the highest quality of care.

(e) The Director of the Blueprint for Health shall recommend to the Commissioner of Vermont Health Access whether to increase payments to primary care providers participating in the Blueprint who choose to engage in care coordination by prescribing buprenorphine or a drug containing buprenorphine for patients with opioid addiction pursuant to this section.

Sec. 4. TELEMEDICINE FOR TREATMENT OF SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER; PILOT

(a) The Green Mountain Care Board and Department of Vermont Health Access shall develop a pilot program to enable a patient taking buprenorphine or a drug containing buprenorphine for a substance use disorder to receive treatment from an addiction medicine specialist delivered through telemedicine at a health care facility that is capable of providing a secure telemedicine connection and whose location is convenient to the patient. The

Board and the Department shall ensure that both the specialist and the hosting facility are reimbursed for services rendered.

(b)(1) Patients beginning treatment for a substance use disorder with buprenorphine or a drug containing buprenorphine shall not receive treatment through telemedicine. A patient may receive treatment through telemedicine only after a period of stabilization on the buprenorphine or drug containing buprenorphine, as measured by an addiction medicine specialist using an assessment tool approved by the Department of Health.

(2) Notwithstanding the provisions of subdivision (1) of this subsection, patients whose care has been transferred from a regional specialty addictions treatment center may begin receiving treatment through telemedicine immediately upon the transfer of care to an office-based opioid treatment provider.

(c) On or before January 15, 2017 and annually thereafter, the Board and the Department shall provide a progress report on the pilot program to the House Committees on Health Care and on Human Services and the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare.

**** Expanding Role of Pharmacies and Pharmacists ****

Sec. 5. 26 V.S.A. § 2022 is amended to read:

§ 2022. DEFINITIONS

As used in this chapter:

(14)(A) "Practice of pharmacy" means:

(i) the interpretation and evaluation of prescription orders;

(ii) the compounding, dispensing, and labeling of drugs and legend devices (except labeling by a manufacturer, packer, or distributor of nonprescription drugs and commercially packaged legend drugs and legend devices);

(iii) the participation in drug selection and drug utilization reviews;

(iv) the proper and safe storage of drugs and legend devices and the maintenance of proper records therefor;

(v) the responsibility for advising, where necessary or where regulated, of therapeutic values, content, hazards, and use of drugs and legend devices; ~~and~~

(vi) the providing of patient care services within the pharmacist's authorized scope of practice;

(vii) the optimizing of drug therapy through the practice of clinical pharmacy; and

(viii) the offering or performing of those acts, services, operations, or transactions necessary in the conduct, operation, management, and control of pharmacy.

(B) "Practice of clinical pharmacy" means:

(i) the health science discipline in which, in conjunction with the patient's other practitioners, a pharmacist provides patient care to optimize medication therapy and to promote disease prevention and the patient's health and wellness;

(ii) the provision of patient care services within the pharmacist's authorized scope of practice, including medication therapy management, comprehensive medication review, and postdiagnostic disease state management services; or

(iii) the practice of pharmacy by a pharmacist pursuant to a collaborative practice agreement.

(C) A rule shall not be adopted by the Board under this chapter that shall require the sale and distribution of nonprescription drugs by a licensed pharmacist or under the supervision of a licensed pharmacist or otherwise interfere with the sale and distribution of such medicines.

* * *

(19) "Collaborative practice agreement" means a written agreement between a pharmacist and a health care facility or prescribing practitioner that permits the pharmacist to engage in the practice of clinical pharmacy for the benefit of the facility's or practitioner's patients.

Sec. 6. 26 V.S.A. § 2023 is added to read:

§ 2023. CLINICAL PHARMACY

In accordance with rules adopted by the Board, a pharmacist may engage in the practice of clinical pharmacy.

Sec. 7. 8 V.S.A. § 4089j is amended to read:

§ 4089j. RETAIL PHARMACIES; FILLING OF PRESCRIPTIONS

(a) ~~A health insurer and pharmacy benefit manager doing business in Vermont shall permit a retail pharmacist licensed under 26 V.S.A. chapter 36 to fill prescriptions in the same manner and at the same level of reimbursement~~

~~as they are filled by mail order pharmacies with respect to the quantity of drugs or days' supply of drugs dispensed under each prescription.~~

~~(b) As used in this section:~~

~~(1) "Health insurer" is defined by shall have the same meaning as in 18 V.S.A. § 9402 and shall also include Medicaid and any other public health care assistance program.~~

~~(2) "Pharmacy benefit manager" means an entity that performs pharmacy benefit management. "Pharmacy benefit management" means an arrangement for the procurement of prescription drugs at negotiated dispensing rates, the administration or management of prescription drug benefits provided by a health insurance plan for the benefit of beneficiaries, or any of the following services provided with regard to the administration of pharmacy benefits:~~

~~(A) mail service pharmacy;~~

~~(B) claims processing, retail network management, and payment of claims to pharmacies for prescription drugs dispensed to beneficiaries;~~

~~(C) clinical formulary development and management services;~~

~~(D) rebate contracting and administration;~~

~~(E) certain patient compliance, therapeutic intervention, and generic substitution programs; and~~

~~(F) disease management programs.~~

~~(3) "Health care provider" means a person, partnership, or corporation, other than a facility or institution, that is licensed, certified, or otherwise authorized by law to provide professional health care service in this State to an individual during that individual's medical care, treatment, or confinement.~~

~~(b) A health insurer and pharmacy benefit manager doing business in Vermont shall permit a retail pharmacist licensed under 26 V.S.A. chapter 36 to fill prescriptions in the same manner and at the same level of reimbursement as they are filled by mail order pharmacies with respect to the quantity of drugs or days' supply of drugs dispensed under each prescription.~~

~~(c) This section shall apply to Medicaid and any other public health care assistance program. Notwithstanding any provision of a health insurance plan to the contrary, if a health insurance plan provides for payment or reimbursement that is within the lawful scope of practice of a pharmacist, the insurer may provide payment or reimbursement for the service when the service is provided by a pharmacist.~~

*Sec. 8. ROLE OF PHARMACIES IN PREVENTING OPIOID ABUSE;
REPORT*

(a) The Department of Health, in consultation with the Board of Pharmacy, pharmacists, prescribing health care practitioners, health insurers, pharmacy benefit managers, and other interested stakeholders shall consider the role of pharmacies in preventing opioid misuse, abuse, and diversion. The Department's evaluation shall include a consideration of whether, under what circumstances, and in what amount pharmacists should be reimbursed for counting or otherwise evaluating the quantity of pills, films, patches, and solutions of opioid controlled substances prescribed by a health care provider to his or her patients.

(b) On or before January 15, 2017, the Department shall report to the House Committees on Health Care and on Human Services and the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare its findings and recommendations with respect to the appropriate role of pharmacies in preventing opioid misuse, abuse, and diversion.

** * * Continuing Medical Education * * **

*Sec. 9. CONTINUING EDUCATION; PROFESSIONAL LICENSING
BOARDS*

(a) On or before December 15, 2016, the professional boards that license physicians, osteopathic physicians, dentists, pharmacists, advanced practice registered nurses, optometrists, and naturopathic physicians shall amend their continuing education rules to require a total of at least two hours of continuing education for each licensing period for all licensees with a registration number from the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), who have a pending application for a DEA number, or who dispense controlled substances on the topics of the abuse and diversion, safe use, and appropriate storage and disposal of controlled substances; the appropriate use of the Vermont Prescription Monitoring System; risk assessment for abuse or addiction; pharmacological and nonpharmacological alternatives to opioids for managing pain; medication tapering; and relevant State and federal laws and regulations concerning the prescription of opioid controlled substances.

(b) The Department of Health shall consult with the Board of Veterinary Medicine and the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets to develop recommendations regarding appropriate safe prescribing and disposal of controlled substances prescribed by veterinarians for animals and dispensed to their owners, as well as appropriate continuing education for veterinarians on the topics described in subsection (a) of this section. On or before January 15, 2017, the Department shall report its findings and recommendations to the House Committees on Agriculture and Forest Products and on Human

Services and the Senate Committees on Agriculture and on Health and Welfare.

** * * Medical Education Core Competencies * * **

*Sec. 10. MEDICAL EDUCATION CORE COMPETENCIES;
PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT OF PRESCRIPTION
DRUG MISUSE*

The Commissioner of Health shall convene medical educators and other stakeholders to develop appropriate curricular interventions and innovations to ensure that students in medical education programs have access to certain core competencies related to safe prescribing practices and to screening, prevention, and intervention for cases of prescription drug misuse and abuse. The goal of the core competencies shall be to support future health care professionals over the course of their medical education to develop skills and a foundational knowledge in the prevention of prescription drug misuse. These competencies should be clear baseline standards for preventing prescription drug misuse, treating patients at risk for substance use disorders, and managing substance use disorders as a chronic disease, as well as developing knowledge in the areas of screening, evaluation, treatment planning, and supportive recovery.

** * * Community Grant Program for Opioid Prevention * * **

Sec. 11. REGIONAL PREVENTION PARTNERSHIPS

To the extent funds are available, the Department of Health shall establish a community grant program for the purpose of supporting local opioid prevention strategies. This program shall support evidence-based approaches and shall be based on a comprehensive community plan, including community education and initiatives designed to increase awareness or implement local programs, or both. Partnerships involving schools, local government, and hospitals shall receive priority.

** * * Pharmaceutical Manufacturer Fee * * **

Sec. 12. 33 V.S.A. § 2004 is amended to read:

§ 2004. MANUFACTURER FEE

(a) Annually, each pharmaceutical manufacturer or labeler of prescription drugs that are paid for by the Department of Vermont Health Access for individuals participating in Medicaid, Dr. Dynasaur, or VPharm shall pay a fee to the Agency of Human Services. The fee shall be ~~0.5~~ 1.5 percent of the previous calendar year's prescription drug spending by the Department and shall be assessed based on manufacturer labeler codes as used in the Medicaid rebate program.

(b) Fees collected under this section shall fund collection and analysis of information on pharmaceutical marketing activities under 18 V.S.A. §§ 4632 and 4633; analysis of prescription drug data needed by the Office of the Attorney General for enforcement activities; the Vermont Prescription Monitoring System established in 18 V.S.A. chapter 84A; the evidence-based education program established in 18 V.S.A. chapter 91, subchapter 2; statewide unused prescription drug disposal initiatives; prevention of prescription drug misuse, abuse, and diversion; treatment of substance use disorder; exploration of nonpharmacological approaches to pain management; a hospital antimicrobial program for the purpose of reducing hospital-acquired infections; the purchase and distribution of naloxone to emergency medical services personnel; and any opioid-antagonist education, training, and distribution program operated by the Department of Health or its agents. The fees shall be collected in the Evidence-Based Education and Advertising Fund established in section 2004a of this title.

(c) The Secretary of Human Services or designee shall make rules for the implementation of this section.

(d) A pharmaceutical manufacturer that fails to pay a fee as required under this section shall be assessed penalties and interest in the same amounts and under the same terms as apply to late payment of income taxes pursuant to 32 V.S.A. chapter 151. The Department shall maintain on its website a list of the manufacturers who have failed to provide timely payment as required under this section.

Sec. 13. 33 V.S.A. § 2004a(a) is amended to read:

(a) The Evidence-Based Education and Advertising Fund is established in the State Treasury as a special fund to be a source of financing for activities relating to fund collection and analysis of information on pharmaceutical marketing activities under 18 V.S.A. §§ 4632 and 4633; for analysis of prescription drug data needed by the Office of the Attorney General for enforcement activities; for the Vermont Prescription Monitoring System established in 18 V.S.A. chapter 84A; for the evidence-based education program established in 18 V.S.A. chapter 91, subchapter 2; for statewide unused prescription drug disposal initiatives; for the prevention of prescription drug misuse, abuse, and diversion; for treatment of substance use disorder; for exploration of nonpharmacological approaches to pain management; for a hospital antimicrobial program for the purpose of reducing hospital-acquired infections; for the purchase and distribution of naloxone to emergency medical services personnel; and for the support of any opioid-antagonist education, training, and distribution program operated by the Department of Health or its agents. Monies deposited into the Fund shall be used for the purposes described in this section.

**** Controlled Substances and Pain Management Advisory Council ****

Sec. 14. 18 V.S.A. § 4255 is added to read:

§ 4255. CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES AND PAIN MANAGEMENT
ADVISORY COUNCIL

(a) There is hereby created a Controlled Substances and Pain Management Advisory Council for the purpose of advising the Commissioner of Health on matters related to the Vermont Prescription Monitoring System and to the appropriate use of controlled substances in treating acute and chronic pain and in preventing prescription drug abuse, misuse, and diversion.

(b)(1) The Controlled Substances and Pain Management Advisory Council shall consist of the following members:

(A) the Commissioner of Health or designee, who shall serve as chair;

(B) the Deputy Commissioner of Health for Alcohol and Drug Abuse Programs or designee;

(C) the Commissioner of Mental Health or designee;

(D) the Commissioner of Public Safety or designee;

(E) the Vermont Attorney General or designee;

(F) the Director of the Blueprint for Health or designee;

(G) the Medical Director of the Department of Vermont Health Access;

(H) the Chair of the Board of Medical Practice or designee, who shall be a clinician;

(I) a representative of the Vermont State Dental Society, who shall be a dentist;

(J) a representative of the Vermont Board of Pharmacy, who shall be a pharmacist;

(K) a faculty member of the academic detailing program at the University of Vermont's College of Medicine;

(L) a faculty member of the University of Vermont's College of Medicine with expertise in the treatment of addiction or chronic pain management;

(M) a representative of the Vermont Medical Society, who shall be a primary care clinician;

(N) a representative of the American Academy of Family Physicians, Vermont chapter, who shall be a primary care clinician;

(O) a representative from the Vermont Board of Osteopathic Physicians, who shall be an osteopath;

(P) a representative of the Federally Qualified Health Centers, who shall be a primary care clinician selected by the Bi-State Primary Care Association;

(Q) a representative of the Vermont Ethics Network;

(R) a representative of the Hospice and Palliative Care Council of Vermont;

(S) a representative of the Office of the Health Care Advocate;

(T) a clinician who works in the emergency department of a hospital, to be selected by the Vermont Association of Hospitals and Health Systems in consultation with any nonmember hospitals;

(U) a member of the Vermont Board of Nursing Subcommittee on APRN Practice, who shall be an advanced practice registered nurse;

(V) a representative from the Vermont Assembly of Home Health and Hospice Agencies;

(W) a psychologist licensed pursuant to 26 V.S.A. chapter 55 who has experience in treating chronic pain, to be selected by the Board of Psychological Examiners;

(X) a drug and alcohol abuse counselor licensed pursuant to 33 V.S.A. chapter 8, to be selected by the Deputy Commissioner of Health for Alcohol and Drug Abuse Programs;

(Y) a retail pharmacist, to be selected by the Vermont Pharmacists Association;

(Z) an advanced practice registered nurse full-time faculty member from the University of Vermont's College of Nursing and Health Sciences;

(AA) a licensed acupuncturist with experience in pain management, to be selected by the Vermont Acupuncture Association;

(BB) a representative of the Vermont Substance Abuse Treatment Providers Association;

(CC) a consumer representative who is either a consumer in recovery from prescription drug abuse or a consumer receiving medical treatment for chronic noncancer-related pain; and

(DD) up to three adjunct members appointed by the Commissioner in consultation with the Opioid Prescribing Task Force.

(2) In addition to the members appointed pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection (b), the Council shall consult with specialists and other individuals as appropriate to the topic under consideration.

(c) Advisory Council members who are not employed by the State or whose participation is not supported through their employment or association shall be entitled to a per diem and expenses as provided by 32 V.S.A. § 1010.

(d)(1) The Advisory Council shall provide advice to the Commissioner concerning rules for the appropriate use of controlled substances in treating acute pain and chronic noncancer pain; the appropriate use of the Vermont Prescription Monitoring System; and the prevention of prescription drug abuse, misuse, and diversion.

(2) The Advisory Council shall evaluate the use of nonpharmacological approaches to treatment for pain, including the appropriateness, efficacy, and cost-effectiveness of using complementary and alternative therapies such as chiropractic, acupuncture, and massage.

(e) The Commissioner of Health may adopt rules pursuant to 3 V.S.A. chapter 25 regarding the appropriate use of controlled substances in treating acute pain and chronic noncancer pain; the appropriate use of the Vermont Prescription Monitoring System; and the prevention of prescription drug abuse, misuse, and diversion, after seeking the advice of the Council.

* * * Acupuncture * * *

**Sec. 15. ACUPUNCTURE AS ALTERNATIVE TREATMENT FOR PAIN
MANAGEMENT AND SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER; REPORTS**

(a) The Director of Health Care Reform in the Agency of Administration, in consultation with the Departments of Health and of Human Resources, shall review Vermont State employees' experience with acupuncture for treatment of pain. On or before December 1, 2016, the Director shall report his or her findings to the House Committees on Health Care and on Human Services and the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare.

(b) Each nonprofit hospital and medical service corporation licensed to do business in this State and providing coverage for pain management shall evaluate the evidence supporting the use of acupuncture as a modality for treating and managing pain in its enrollees, including the experience of other states in which acupuncture is covered by health insurance plans. On or before January 15, 2017, each such corporation shall report to the House Committees on Health Care and on Human Services and the Senate Committee

on Health and Welfare its assessment of whether its insurance plans should provide coverage for acupuncture when used to treat or manage pain.

(c) On or before January 15, 2017, the Department of Health, Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Programs shall make available to its preferred provider network evidence-based best practices related to the use of acupuncture to treat substance use disorder.

Sec. 15a. ACUPUNCTURE; MEDICAID PILOT PROJECT

(a) The Department of Vermont Health Access shall develop a pilot project to offer acupuncture services to Medicaid-eligible Vermonters with a diagnosis of chronic pain. The project would provide acupuncture services for a defined period of time to determine if acupuncture treatment as an alternative or adjunctive to prescribing opioids is as effective or more effective than opioids alone for returning individuals to social, occupational, and psychological function. The project shall include:

(1) an advisory group of pain management specialists and acupuncture providers familiar with the current science on evidence-based use of acupuncture to treat or manage chronic pain;

(2) specific patient eligibility requirements regarding the specific cause or site of chronic pain for which the evidence indicates acupuncture may be an appropriate treatment; and

(3) input and involvement from the Department of Health to promote consistency with other State policy initiatives designed to reduce the reliance on opioid medications in treating or managing chronic pain.

(b) On or before January 15, 2017, the Department of Vermont Health Access shall provide a progress report on the pilot project to the House Committees on Health Care and on Human Services and the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare that includes an implementation plan for the pilot project described in this section. In addition, the Department shall consider any appropriate role for acupuncture in treating substance use disorder, including consulting with health care providers using acupuncture in this manner, and shall make recommendations in its progress report regarding the use of acupuncture in treating Medicaid beneficiaries with substance use disorder.

* * * Rulemaking * * *

**Sec. 16. PRESCRIBING OPIOIDS FOR ACUTE AND CHRONIC PAIN;
RULEMAKING**

(a) The Commissioner of Health, after consultation with the Controlled Substances and Pain Management Advisory Council, shall adopt rules

governing the prescription of opioids. The rules may include numeric and temporal limitations on the number of pills prescribed, including a maximum number of pills to be prescribed following minor medical procedures, consistent with evidence-informed best practices for effective pain management. The rules may require the contemporaneous prescription of naloxone in certain circumstances, and shall require informed consent for patients that explains the risks associated with taking opioids, including addiction, physical dependence, side effects, tolerance, overdose, and death. The rules shall also require prescribers prescribing opioids to patients to provide information concerning the safe storage and disposal of controlled substances.

* * * Appropriations * * *

Sec. 17. APPROPRIATIONS

(a) The sum of \$250,000.00 is appropriated from the Evidence-Based Education and Advertising Fund to the Department of Health in fiscal year 2017 for the purpose of funding the evidence-based education program established in 18 V.S.A. chapter 91, subchapter 2, including evidence-based information about safe prescribing of controlled substances and alternatives to opioids for treating pain.

(b) The sum of \$625,000.00 is appropriated from the Evidence-Based Education and Advertising Fund to the Department of Health in fiscal year 2017 for the purpose of funding statewide unused prescription drug disposal initiatives, of which \$100,000.00 shall be used for a MedSafe collection and disposal program and program coordinator, \$50,000.00 shall be used for unused medication envelopes for a mail-back program, \$225,000.00 shall be used for a public information campaign on the safe disposal of controlled substances, and \$250,000.00 shall be used for a public information campaign on the responsible use of prescription drugs.

(c) The sum of \$150,000.00 is appropriated from the Evidence-Based Education and Advertising Fund to the Department of Health in fiscal year 2017 for the purpose of purchasing and distributing opioid antagonist rescue kits.

(d) The sum of \$250,000.00 is appropriated from the Evidence-Based Education and Advertising Fund to the Department of Health in fiscal year 2017 for the purpose of establishing a hospital antimicrobial program to reduce hospital-acquired infections.

(e) The sum of \$32,000.00 is appropriated from the Evidence-Based Education and Advertising Fund to the Department of Health in fiscal year

2017 for the purpose of purchasing and distributing naloxone to emergency medical services personnel throughout the State.

(f) The sum of \$200,000.00 is appropriated from the Evidence-Based Education and Advertising Fund to the Department of Vermont Health Access in fiscal year 2017 for the purpose of exploring nonpharmacological approaches to pain management by implementing the pilot project established in Sec. 15a of this act to evaluate the use of acupuncture in treating chronic pain in Medicaid beneficiaries.

Sec. 18. REPEAL

2013 Acts and Resolves No. 75, Sec. 14, as amended by 2014 Acts and Resolves No. 199, Sec. 60 (Unified Pain Management System Advisory Council) is repealed.

** * * Effective Dates * * **

Sec. 19. EFFECTIVE DATES

(a) Secs. 1–2 (VPMS), 3 (opioid addiction treatment care coordination), 13 (use of Evidence-Based Education and Advertising Fund), 14 (Controlled Substances and Pain Management Advisory Council), 17 (appropriations), and 18 (repeal) shall take effect on July 1, 2016, except that in Sec. 2, 18 V.S.A. § 4289(f)(2) (dispenser reporting to VPMS) shall take effect 30 days following notice and a determination by the Commissioner of Health that daily reporting is practicable.

(b) Secs. 4 (telemedicine pilot), 5–7 (clinical pharmacy), 8 (role of pharmacies; report), 10 (medical education), 11 (regional partnerships), 15–15a (acupuncture studies), 16 (rulemaking), and this section shall take effect on passage.

(c) Sec. 9 (continuing education) shall take effect on July 1, 2016 and shall apply beginning with licensing periods beginning on or after that date.

(d) Notwithstanding 1 V.S.A. § 214, Sec. 12 (manufacturer fee) shall take effect on passage and shall apply retroactive to January 1, 2016.