

Testimony on an Act Relating to Examining Mental Health Care and Care Coordination
Susan Barrett, Executive Director Green Mountain Care Board
February 24, 2017

The Green Mountain Care Board supports the Senate Health and Welfare committee's bill to examine mental health care and care coordination. We suggest the following edits to the draft bill:

Section 2 Operation of Mental Health System

The Green Mountain Care Board requests that the Secretary of the Agency of Human Services is made the entity primarily responsible for the analysis of patient movement through Vermont's mental health system. This is appropriate because the Department of Mental Health is located within the Agency, and is the state entity with access to the requisite data and resources for this analysis. The Board proposes that it will work in collaboration with the Secretary on the study.

Further, we ask that the completion date be moved from November 15, 2017 to December 15, 2017. The Board plans to update the Health Resource Allocation Plan (HRAP) in FY 2018, which will be used to inform the analysis and proposal contained in this section. Although the Board has included funding to support its HRAP work in its FY 2018 budget proposal, that funding, if approved, will not become available until July 2017. We believe that our request to extend the completion date by one month will allow us to glean information from our HRAP work, resulting in a more informed analysis and proposal.

Section 5 Inpatient Geriatric and Forensic Facility

The Green Mountain Care Board agrees there is a need for additional psychiatric services for Vermont's geriatric population. This has become increasingly evident to the Board during its review of skilled nursing facility transfers; during several recent certificate of need hearings, the Board heard testimony from nursing home operators highlighting the need for geriatric psychiatric services in this state. The Board supports this section of the bill.

Section 9 Work Force Development

The Board recommends that the language in this section is changed to include, as a consulting entity on the report, the Vermont Health Care Innovation Project's (VHCIP) work group dedicated to examining workforce issues. Additionally, the Board should be excluded from participation in this task because it is ultimately responsible for approving the State's workforce plan.