

Act Relating to Examining Mental Health Care and Care Coordination

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The Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council appreciates the opportunity to submit testimony regarding the Senate Health and Welfare's Committee bill to examine mental health care and care coordination. The Council's interest in this bill stems from the fact that 40 percent of the Vermonters with Developmental Disabilities served by designated and specialized service agencies receive mental health services. While the Council supports the bill in general, we have two major concerns:

1. Specialized service agencies, developmental disability services, and people with developmental disabilities should be included to provide alignment across the delivery system.
2. The assessment of the need for new institutions in the State should include an assessment of the availability and viability of home and community-based long term services and supports. Any evaluations regarding the need for or advisability of creating new institutions and/or new nursing home or in-patient treatment units must include an evaluation of the existing home and community based services system and what it needs in order to serve more Vermonters.

It's important that this legislation reflect Vermont's longstanding commitment to and success in providing the home and community-based services to which aging Vermonters and Vermonters living with disabilities are entitled under the law.

Section 1 Findings

Please consider adding a finding that pursuant to State and federal law, services must be provided in the **most integrated and least restrictive** settings possible.

In addition, please consider adding a finding that Vermont is committed to providing people who are receiving publicly financed care in an institution or who are eligible to receive such care, **choice with respect to where they live and receive their care.**

Section 7 Inpatient Geriatric and/or Forensic Psychiatric Skilled Nursing Unit or Facility

The Secretary of Human Services shall assess the extent to which an inpatient geriatric and forensic psychiatric facility is needed within the State.

The assessment shall include a plan for the design, siting and funding of home and community based services sufficient to assure that Vermonters can exercise their right to receive services in the most integrated setting possible and choose where to live while receiving services.

Section 10 Work Force Development: Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance use disorder workforce study committee

Please add representatives from the following:

Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council

Governor's Commission on Employment of People with Disabilities

Governors Health Care Workforce Task Force

Note – Current draft includes a representative from the VT Health Care Innovation Project's Work Group. The VHCIP ends before 7/1/17.

Section 12 Employment Models for Recovery

The Secretary of Human Services provide the best outcomes for moving individuals with a substance use disorder, psychiatric disability or developmental disability into employment.....

Section 15 Integration of Payments; Accountable Care Organizations

Please eliminate "home and community based services" from line 13. Medicaid funded HCBS is too large for this Bill.