

1 H.355

2 Introduced by Representatives Rachelson of Burlington, Burke of Brattleboro,
3 Christensen of Weathersfield, Cina of Burlington, Cordes of
4 Lincoln, Gonzalez of Winooski, Mrowicki of Putney, and
5 Yacovone of Morristown

6 Referred to Committee on

7 Date:

8 Subject: Health; mental health; order of nonhospitalization; community mental
9 health services

10 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to fund two
11 enhanced community mental health service pilot projects for individuals
12 seeking diversion from an order of nonhospitalization.

13 An act relating to enhanced community mental health pilot projects

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

15 Sec. 1. LEGISLATIVE INTENT

16 (a) It is the intent of the General Assembly to reduce unnecessary
17 psychiatric inpatient admissions and those costs associated with such
18 admissions. Any savings resulting from the pilot projects established by this
19 act shall be used to retroactively offset the cost of the projects.

1 (b) It is the intent of the General Assembly that implementation of quality
2 improvement practices as part of the pilot projects established by this act shall
3 have the effect of not only improving outcomes and increasing cost efficiencies
4 but also have the ability for replication elsewhere in Vermont.

5 Sec. 2. APPROPRIATION; ENHANCED COMMUNITY MENTAL

6 HEALTH SERVICE PILOT

7 (a) To the extent funds permit, the Department of Mental Health shall
8 administer pilot projects in two communities for the purpose of expanding
9 voluntary community mental health services for individuals seeking diversion
10 from an order of nonhospitalization pursuant to 18 V.S.A. § 7618. Services
11 delivered as part of the pilot projects shall be provided by mobile,
12 interdisciplinary teams, which shall use person-centered, recovery-oriented
13 approaches, including:

- 14 (1) real, active, and sensitive outreach;
15 (2) mental health services;
16 (3) vocational assistance;
17 (4) education concerning family issues;
18 (5) information to develop wellness skills;
19 (6) peer support services; and
20 (7) housing supports.

1 (b)(1) On or before January 15, 2021, 2022, and 2023, the Department shall
2 submit a report to the House Committees on Appropriations and on Health
3 Care and to the Senate Committees on Appropriations and on Health and
4 Welfare evaluating the effectiveness of both of the pilot projects. The report
5 shall include feedback from the following stakeholders:
6 (A) the Commissioner of Mental Health or designee;
7 (B) the Commissioner of Public Safety or designee;
8 (C) the Chief Superior Judge or designee;
9 (D) a representative of Vermont Care Partners;
10 (E) a representative of the Vermont Association of Hospitals and
11 Health Systems;
12 (F) a representative of Vermont Legal Aid's Mental Health Project;
13 (G) the Executive Director of the Department of State's Attorneys
14 and Sheriffs;
15 (H) the Vermont Defender General or designee;
16 (I) the Executive Director of Vermont Psychiatric Survivors or
17 designee;
18 (J) the Mental Health Care Ombudsman designated pursuant to
19 18 V.S.A. § 7259;
20 (K) an individual who was previously under an order of
21 nonhospitalization, appointed by Vermont Psychiatric Survivors; and

1 (L) the family member of an individual who is currently or was
2 previously under an order of nonhospitalization, appointed by the Vermont
3 chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness.

4 (2) To the extent funds permit, the Department shall contract with an
5 independent consultant with expertise on the treatment of mental health to
6 conduct an independent evaluation of the pilot projects established pursuant to
7 subsection (a) of this section. On or before January 15, 2021, 2022, and 2023,
8 the independent evaluator shall submit a report to the House Committees on
9 Appropriations and on Health Care and to the Senate Committees on
10 Appropriations and on Health and Welfare evaluating the effectiveness of both
11 of the pilot projects.

12 (c) The pilot projects shall expire on January 1, 2023.

13 Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

14 This act shall take effect on July 1, 2019.