

February 26, 2019

Senator Ginny Lyons
Senate Committee on Health and Welfare
Vermont Statehouse
115 State St.
Montpelier, VT 05602

Dear Senator Lyons,

Thank you for the opportunity to follow up with some suggested additions to S. 7.

We are a group of disability advocates who have been meeting since last Fall to discuss the opportunities and challenges presented by Vermont's healthcare reform efforts. We share an interest in preserving and improving the Medicaid-funded services on which people with disabilities rely, including long term, community-based supports.

By seeking to evaluate the progress made through the All Payer Accountable Care Model Agreement, S. 7 can position the Legislature to provide guidance to the Agency of Human Services, the Green Mountain Care Board, and other policy makers on the progress of Vermont's healthcare reform efforts. S.7 currently addresses the important issue of the manner and degree to which social services, as provided by Vermont's strong network of community agencies, are integrated into the payment mechanisms, quality assurance standards, and care coordination provided by Vermont's Accountable Care Organization.

We believe S.7 could be strengthened by two additions. First, the Legislature may want to request a study to determine a general accounting of the public investment and the return on this investment. In addition, the Legislature may want to ask for a review of important outcomes such as: Any cost shift related to increased reimbursement rates for Medicaid and Medicare part A/B under the All Payer – ACO Model; the degree to which the All Payer – ACO Model fosters greater utilization of primary care; and how the All Payer—ACO Model addresses the needs of dually eligible Vermonters, who are high utilizers of medical services. With this information, the Legislature will be well prepared to guide the next phase of Vermont's healthcare reform.

Second, we suggest that this study be undertaken by an independent body – possibly the Joint Fiscal Office. We believe the importance of this work more than justifies the potential cost involved. The Green Mountain Care Board has the very challenging duty under Act 113 of both regulating the ACO and ensuring that the goals of the All Payer – ACO Model are achieved. In this regard, the Green Mountain Care Board is doing what the Legislature asked of it; but these two functions may not be well-paired.

As disability advocates, we want to ensure that Vermont's comprehensive, integrated healthcare system works optimally for all Vermonters, especially those who rely on the Medicaid program and on long term services and supports to address their complex care needs.

We would welcome an opportunity to talk with you and your Committee further about these suggestions.

Yours Sincerely,

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Enc.

Co-signed by the following:

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