

HHC Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) language

* * * Health Care * * *

Sec. 1. HEALTH CARE PROVIDER STABILIZATION PROGRAM;

CORONAVIRUS RELIEF FUND; AGENCY OF HUMAN SERVICES;

APPROPRIATION

(a) The sum of \$XXX,000,000.00 is appropriated from the Coronavirus Relief Fund to the Agency of Human Services in fiscal year 2021 for purposes of establishing the Health Care Provider Stabilization Grant Program as set forth in this section.

(b) The General Assembly determines that the expenditure of monies from the Coronavirus Relief Fund as set forth in this section is necessary to stabilize health care providers based on their COVID-19-related costs and the fiscal impacts of disruptions to their business operations as a result of COVID-19. Health care providers have had to change their care delivery models, suspend elective procedures and surgeries, reduce patient volume, acquire additional equipment and supplies, and make other modifications to their practices in order to respond to and mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 public health emergency.

(c)(1) The Agency of Human Services shall establish the Health Care Provider Stabilization Grant Program to disburse the funds appropriated in this section to eligible health care provider applicants using a needs-based application process. Of the funds appropriated to the Agency in subsection (a) of this section, the Agency shall disburse a first round of grants totaling \$XX,000,000.00 by August 14, 2020 and a second round of grants totaling \$YY,000,000.00 by later date.

(2) Based on federal law and guidance, the Agency shall establish guidelines identifying the specific types of costs for which grant recipients may use grant funds. Costs are not compensable under this section if the same costs or expenses have been or will be covered by insurance or by another State or federal grants; provided, however, that this restriction does not include loans or advance payments for which repayment is expected.

(3)(A) Providers of health care services in the following categories shall be eligible to apply for grant funds pursuant to this section if the provider is located in Vermont and delivers health care services in this State:

(i) hospitals, including community hospitals and psychiatric hospitals;

(ii) physician services, including independent medical practices, hospital-owned medical practices, designated and specialized services agencies, federally qualified health centers, rural health clinics, ambulatory surgical centers, and laboratory and imaging centers;

(iii) dental services;

(iv) other professional services, including mental health providers, substance use disorder treatment providers, advanced practice registered nurses, physical therapists, podiatrists, optometrists, chiropractors, and other health care providers;

(v) home health and hospice agencies;

(vi) pharmacy services;

(vii) long-term care services, including skilled nursing facilities, nursing homes, residential care homes, assisted living facilities, and adult day service providers;
and

(viii) organizations recognized by the Agency of Human Services through their status as provider grant recipients providing health support services, including peer support services.

(B) The Agency of Human Services shall evaluate applicants based on their demonstrated need and ability to meet the criteria set forth in subsection (d) of this section, not on the basis of a provider applicant's size or its proportion of health care spending in this State, and shall consider the impact of the requested funds on the applicant's sustainability.

(d) In determining whether and how much to award an applicant from the Health Care Provider Stabilization Grant Program, the Agency shall consider the applicant's demonstrated need and the extent to which the applicant meets some or all of the following criteria, to the extent applicable:

(1) the applicant would use the grant funds to sustain or improve the quality of health care services, including essential community services and services delivered using telehealth, provided during the COVID-19 public health emergency;

(2) the applicant would use the grant funds to prepare for mitigating or responding to anticipated surges in COVID-19 cases or to prepare to meet increased needs for specific types of services, such as the likely demand for mental health services as a result of prolonged social isolation and economic stress due to the COVID-19 public health emergency;

(3) the applicant would use the grant funds to provide or support services that would otherwise likely become limited or unavailable as a result of business disruptions caused by the COVID-19 public health emergency, or the grant funds would enable the

applicant to withstand and recover from business disruptions caused by the COVID-19 public health emergency, or both; and

(4) the applicant appears capable of making appropriate and efficient use of the grant funds.

(e)(1)(A) Applications for the Health Care Provider Stabilization Grant Program shall be submitted to the Agency of Human Services on or before July 30, 2020 for the first round of grants and on or before later date for the second round of grants. The Agency shall make applications for the Grant Program available on or before July 3, 2020 and shall provide notice and outreach regarding the availability of the grants and grant applications to health care providers and provider organizations in a timely manner in advance of each round of grants.

(B) The information the Agency requires a provider to provide in an application for the Health Care Provider Stabilization Grant Program should not exceed the minimum necessary to demonstrate the applicant's need for the grant funds requested and the degree to which the provider satisfies some or all of the criteria in subsection (d) of this section, to the extent applicable.

(C) The Agency shall consider each application received and shall prioritize applications and the amount of each grant award based on the applicant's level of financial need and on the extent to which the applicant satisfies some or all of the criteria set forth in subsection (d) of this section, to the extent applicable.

(D)(i) On or before August 14, 2020, the Agency shall disburse the first round of grant funds to the successful applicants.

(ii) On or before later date, the Agency shall disburse the second round of grant funds to the successful applicants.

(3)(A) Grants to be awarded pursuant to this section may be requested and disbursed as a single payment or as multiple payments, depending on the needs of the applicant and the proposed uses of the funds, provided that all funds shall be disbursed, and cover costs incurred, on or before December 30, 2020 as required by the CARES Act.

(B) An applicant who received grant funds in the first round of grants shall be eligible to apply for additional grant funds in the second round of grants, provided that any grant funds received in the first round shall be considered when determining the applicant's financial need in the second round.

(f) Within two weeks following the first and second round of disbursal of Health Care Provider Stabilization Grant Program funds, the Agency of Human Services shall report to the House Committees on Appropriations, on Health Care, and on Human Services and the Senate Committees on Appropriations and on Health and Welfare regarding its distribution of the grant funds, including the types of providers awarded funds and the aggregate amounts awarded by provider type.

Sec. 2. COMMUNITY HEALTH INVESTMENTS; CORONAVIRUS RELIEF FUND;

APPROPRIATION

(a) The sum of \$9,000,000.00 is appropriated from the Coronavirus Relief Fund to the Agency of Human Services in fiscal year 2021 in order to sustain existing population health management programs.

(b) The General Assembly determines that the expenditure of monies from the Coronavirus Relief Fund as set forth in this section is necessary to promote the health of

Vermonters, including identifying patients most at risk from COVID-19, providing outreach and education regarding prevention of and testing for COVID-19, expanding access to telehealth, and maintaining care management programs to help patients manage chronic conditions while access to health care services is limited as a result of the COVID-19 public health emergency.

Sec. 3. ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE; CORONAVIRUS RELIEF FUND;

APPROPRIATION

(a) The sum of \$10,000,000.00 is appropriated from the Coronavirus Relief Fund to the Agency of Human Services in fiscal year 2021 for purposes of providing financial assistance to Vermonters that will enable them to access health care services.

(b) The General Assembly determines that the expenditure of monies from the Coronavirus Relief Fund as set forth in this section is necessary to help Vermonters who are experiencing economic harm as a result of the COVID-19 public health emergency and are struggling to afford necessary health care services.

(c) The Agency shall develop a streamlined process for offering financial assistance to Vermont residents by providing consumers with:

(1) assistance with out-of-pocket costs for health care services based on financial need; and

(2) premium assistance based on financial need to prevent loss of coverage for individuals with health insurance who do not otherwise receive premium supports.

Sec. 4. ADDRESSING HEALTH DISPARITIES; CORONAVIRUS RELIEF FUND;
APPROPRIATION

(a) The sum of \$1,000,000.00 is appropriated from the Coronavirus Relief Fund to Department of Health in fiscal year 2021 for purposes of addressing health disparities in Vermont as they relate to COVID-19 by providing direct services to affected populations and conducting outreach to isolated individuals at high risk of adverse outcomes from COVID-19.

(b) The General Assembly determines that the expenditure of monies from the Coronavirus Relief Fund as set forth in this section is necessary to reduce health disparities that disproportionately affect individuals who belong to or identify with certain social categories by providing all Vermont residents with an equal opportunity to be healthy and to protect themselves and others from COVID-19.

(c)(1) The Department of Health shall use the funds appropriated in this section to provide up to 10 grants to community agencies to provide direct services to populations most likely to experience adverse outcomes from COVID-19 based on factors such as race or ethnicity, immigrant status, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, and geographic location. Grantees shall work directly with affected populations and conduct outreach to isolated individuals at high risk of adverse outcomes from COVID-19 to assess and identify their needs during the COVID-19 public health emergency in order to help them protect themselves and others from the disease, such as by providing education and resources regarding prevention of COVID-19 in languages and formats appropriate to the population, assisting with access to COVID-19 testing and treatment, and

identifying and addressing difficulties in safely meeting essential needs, including food, shelter, health care, and emotional support, during the public health emergency.

(2) The Department shall select grantees based on prior demonstrated work with the affected population, membership as part of the affected population, and ability to rapidly implement programming in response to the COVID-19 public health emergency.

(3) The Department may use up to \$50,000.00 of the funds appropriated pursuant to subsection (a) of this section to hire one full-time, temporary position to coordinate outreach efforts and to administer the grant program created by this section.

(d)(1) The grantees under the program established in this section shall provide insights gathered from their work under the grant, and recommendations for further actions based on those insights, to the Department to inform the Department's future efforts to address health disparities in Vermont.

(2) The Department of Health shall use the insights and recommendations provided by the grantees, along with the recommendations from the Governor's Racial Equity Task Force expected on or before August 15, 2020, to enhance and expand upon the Department's previous work in addressing health disparities in Vermont and shall consider ways to continue involving members of the affected populations in the Department's health equity planning processes and action plans going forward.

Sec. 5. SUICIDE PREVENTION; CORONAVIRUS RELIEF FUND;

APPROPRIATION

(a) The sum of \$1,000,000.00 is appropriated from the Coronavirus Relief Fund to Department of Mental Health in fiscal year 2021 for purposes of implementing suicide prevention initiatives focused on individuals at heightened risk of death by suicide due to

economic stress, social isolation, or other impacts of the COVID-19 public health emergency.

(b) The General Assembly determines that the expenditure of monies from the Coronavirus Relief Fund as set forth in this section is necessary to mitigate the negative effects of COVID-19 on Vermonters' mental health as economic stress, social isolation, and other impacts of the COVID-19 public health emergency have increased many individuals' feelings of panic, fear, anxiety, depression, loneliness, and other mental health concerns.