



Addendum to Vermont Care Partners Testimony on H.703

This language is excerpted from the March 15th House Notice Calendar H.703. Vermont Care Partners requests that it be reinstated into the bill. However, we recommend eliminating (c)4 requiring reporting on number of new employees attracting to the positions. Ascertaining reasons for employment is difficult with over 1000 hires annually by multiple staff and because reasons for accepting employment are generally based on multiple, rather than a single factor.

Sec. 28. AGENCY OF HUMAN SERVICES; DESIGNATED AND SPECIALIZED SERVICE AGENCIES; WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

(a) The sum of \$6,000,000.00 is appropriated to the Agency of Human Services from the General Fund in fiscal year 2023 to expand the supply of high-quality mental health, substance use disorder treatment, and developmental disability services professionals by distributing funds to the designated and specialized service agencies equitably based on each agency's proportion of full-time- equivalent (FTE) mental health, substance use disorder treatment, and developmental disability services staff to the total number of FTE mental health, substance use disorder treatment, and developmental disability services staff across all designated and specialized service agencies statewide. The designated and specialized service agencies shall use these funds for loan repayment and tuition assistance to promote the recruitment and retention of high-quality mental health, substance use disorder treatment, and developmental disability services professionals available to Vermont residents in need of their services, as set forth in subsection (b) of this section.

(b)(1) Each designated and specialized service agency shall make the funds received pursuant to subsection (a) of this section available to its current and prospective employees as set forth in subdivisions (A) and (B) of this subdivision

(1) on a rolling basis in exchange for a one-year service obligation to provide mental health, substance use disorder treatment, or developmental disability services, or a combination of these, at a designated or specialized service agency in this State. The funds may be used for the following purposes:

(A) loan repayment for master's-level clinicians, bachelor's-level direct service staff, and nurses; and

(B) tuition assistance for individuals pursuing degrees to become master's-level clinicians, bachelor's-level direct service staff, and nurses.

(2) Loan repayment and tuition assistance funds shall be available to the current and prospective employees of designated and specialized service agencies in the form of forgivable loans, with the debt forgiven upon the employee's completion of the required service obligation.

(c) Until the funds have been fully expended, the Agency of Human Services shall report on or before January 15 annually to the House Committees on Appropriations, on Health Care, and on Human Services and the Senate Committees on Appropriations and on Health and Welfare with information on the following:

(1) the specific designated and specialized service agencies that have received funds to date and the programs within each of those agencies in which the financial assistance recipients will deliver services;

(2) the amount of financial assistance funding provided to each recipient

(3) the specific degrees or certificates toward which the tuition assistance recipients are working and those earned by loan repayment recipients; and

(4) the number of new employees attracted to the designated and specialized service agencies as a result of the financial assistance, their fields of study, and the programs in which they deliver services.