

April 14, 2021

Vermont Health Care for All is in support of S120 with the following changes:

1. We suggest changing the framing of S.120 to align with existing state statute embodied in Act 48:Pg. 2. After Item (6), in Section 1, an additional item is needed (suggested Item 7) which frames this within the goals of health care reform in Vermont and universality:

The state of Vermont is committed to universal health care according to state statute [18 V.S.A. § 9371], which states “The State of Vermont must ensure universal access to and coverage for high-quality, medically necessary health services for all Vermonters. Systemic barriers, such as cost, must not prevent people from accessing necessary health care. All Vermonters must receive affordable and appropriate health care at the appropriate time in the appropriate setting.” In addition, 18 V.S.A. § 9371, states that, “Primary care be preserved and enhanced so that Vermonters have care available to them, preferably within their own communities.” Reforms must therefore take place within the enunciated goals of universal access without cost as a barrier to care.

2. The public engagement sessions listed on page 5 should not be opportunities for local “stakeholders” to speak at a panel (as this often results in much time being used and little time to hear from the public at large). These sessions should be actual listening sessions for the general public to speak. Stakeholders have many opportunities to weigh in generally in the legislative process, and indeed, this bill provides the committee with additional opportunities to reach out to them [see Sec. 2, d(1)].
3. Under Section 1 (6) -- on partnering with the Biden administration for demonstration waivers – wording should be added on the idea of phased implementation of Act 48. (Act 48 is Vermont law and has not been rescinded, so we are still committed to universal publicly financed health care, President Biden’s new Secretary of HHS (Xavier Becerra) is favorable to statewide single payer waivers, as certainly is the Chair of the Senate Budget Committee (Senator Bernie Sanders).
 - a. A similar addition is needed under Section 2(c)(5).

