



Vermont Program for Quality in Health Care, Inc.

**To: Senate Health & Welfare Committee**

**From: Hillary Wolfley, Executive Director ([hillaryw@vpqhc.org](mailto:hillaryw@vpqhc.org))**

**RE: Senate Health & Welfare Health Care Reform Committee Bill 25-0907**

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## Introduction

Thank you for the opportunity to submit feedback on Committee Bill 25-0907. The Vermont Program for Quality in Health Care, Inc. (VPQHC) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, established in 1988 and designated by the Vermont Legislature as an independent peer review committee. Since 1995, VPQHC has been Vermont's statewide quality organization, focused on improving health care quality. We submit our comments with the understanding that quality, alongside access and cost, is essential to the health care system and must be integrated and supported in health care reform. We appreciate the committee's efforts in advancing healthcare reform and recognize its importance. Our recommendations focus on ensuring quality is effectively incorporated while enhancing the Health Care Delivery Plan's clarity, effectiveness, and long-term impact on Vermont's health care system.

We have organized our feedback by section, outlining the rationale for each suggested language change and providing recommended wording for consideration. Additionally, we have included concluding remarks.

## Feedback by Section

### § 9456. BUDGET REVIEW

**Rationale:** It is essential that suggested activities and work align with ongoing efforts in order to enhance efficiency and minimize duplication. Encouraging a strengths-based approach to collaboration will help maximize expertise and enhance outcomes.

#### **Suggested Language for Consideration:**

(e)(1) Agree with VMS recommendation that this section should be more broadly worded and also coordinate with ongoing work by VPQHC, and the new Statewide Health Care Delivery Plan and Advisory Committee. VMS suggested rewording to: *The Board, in consultation with the Vermont Program for Quality in Healthcare and in alignment with the goals of the Statewide Health Care Delivery Plan, shall establish measurements for hospital costs, quality and access.*

### Sec. 6. 18 V.S.A. § 9403 (b) § 9403. STATEWIDE HEALTH CARE DELIVERY PLAN

**Rationale:** Reframing the Plan as the "Statewide Health Care Delivery **Strategic** Plan" could emphasize its role as an actionable roadmap. Clear expectations for structure and implementation



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can enhance effectiveness. Evaluating ROI, planning processes, and outcomes ensures accountability, transparency, and resource efficiency. Beyond access gaps and financial sustainability, the Plan should also address system-wide quality improvement, supporting evidence-based decisions and enhancing patient care across Vermont.

### **Suggested Language for Consideration:**

(b) The Plan Shall:

- **Define a shared vision, goals, and objectives to improve access, quality, efficiency, and affordability, including benchmarks for assessing progress.**
- **Establish performance metrics and accountability measures to track system-wide progress, promote transparency, and support continuous improvement.**
- **Provide a phased implementation timeline with milestones and regular reporting to ensure adaptability and course correction as needs evolve.**
- **Identify the resources, infrastructure, and support needed to achieve established targets, ensuring feasibility and sustainability of implementation.**
- **Incorporate an evaluation framework within the Results-Based Accountability approach to assess both the effectiveness of the planning process and its overall impact. The evaluation should include:**
  - **How much was accomplished? Assessing initiatives implemented, stakeholder engagement, and resource allocation.**
  - **How well was it executed? Evaluating efficiency, adherence to best practices, and responsiveness to stakeholder input.**
  - **Who is better off? Measuring the impact on Vermont's health care system, including improvements in system performance, patient outcomes, cost containment, and access.**

(b) The Plan Shall (6) Identify:

- **Opportunities to improve the quality of care across the delivery system.**
- **Enhancements in quality reporting and data collection to provide a more accurate and real-time picture of the quality of health care delivery across Vermont.**
- **Exemplars of quality care to drive best practice dissemination and strengthen Vermont's learning health system.**

(b) The Plan Shall (6) Identify:

- (A) gaps in access to care, as well as circumstances in which service closures or consolidations could result in improvements in **or negatively impact** quality, access, and affordability

### **§ 9403a. HEALTH CARE DELIVERY ADVISORY COMMITTEE**



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**Rationale:** As a key contributor to the Plan's development, VPQHC recommends including its Executive Director (or designee) on the Health Care Delivery Advisory Committee. With VPQHC's expertise in health care quality and performance measurement, this representation would ensure a strong focus on quality in the Plan's development and implementation, as well as contribute to the advisory committee's monitoring and evaluation efforts.

**Suggested Language for Consideration:**

(2) collaborate with the Green Mountain Care Board, the Agency of Human Services, the Department of Financial Regulation, **the Vermont Program for Quality in Health Care, Inc.**, and other interested stakeholders in the development and maintenance of the Statewide Healthcare Delivery Plan developed pursuant to section 94023 of this title;

**§ 9353. INTEGRATION OF HEALTH CARE DATA**

(a) We appreciate being included in this section and are pleased to offer our perspective on quality measurement, specifically regarding reporting and actionable data for quality improvement.

**Sec. 9: RETAINING ACCOUNTABLE CARE ORGANIZATION CAPABILITIES; GREEN MOUNTAIN CARE BOARD; BLUEPRINT FOR HEALTH; REPORT**

Insofar as quality data reporting and improvement activities are being assessed as part of this process, VPQHC requests to be included to lend its expertise on how existing data collection, reporting structures, and quality improvement initiatives align with or could benefit from retained ACO capabilities.

**Sec. 11. APPROPRIATIONS**

VPQHC would require additional resources to effectively engage in this work.

**Conclusion**

Thank you again for considering VPQHC's feedback on the draft bill. Our recommendations focus on:

- ✓ Clear goals and measurable outcomes to track progress and effectiveness.
- ✓ A structured evaluation framework to assess the impact of investment in planning.
- ✓ Improved quality measurement and best practices sharing to foster a learning health system.



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✓ Inclusive stakeholder engagement, incorporating VPQHC's expertise in quality reporting and system improvement.

Please feel free to reach out if you would like to discuss further. Hillary Wolfley ([hillaryw@vpqhc.org](mailto:hillaryw@vpqhc.org)).