

S c. 1. STUDY; DESIGNATED AND SPECIALIZED SERVICE AGENCY SYSTEM

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(a) The Agency of Human Services, in consultation with the designated and specialized service agencies and the stakeholder group established in subsection (d) of this section, shall conduct a study of the designated and specialized service agency system to review its role, responsibilities, and capacity within Vermont's health and human services continuum.

(b) At a minimum, the study shall include:

(1) a review of the services provided by the designated and specialized service agencies, including identification of the essential and specialty services delivered on behalf of the State;

(2) a review of the statutory, contractual, and administrative framework guiding the work of the designated and specialized service agencies, including specifically the expectations, responsibilities, and authorities of the designated and specialized service agencies;

(3) an analysis of how emerging needs, pilot initiatives, and system transformations have expanded or altered the responsibilities of the designated and specialized service agencies over time;

(4) consideration of the designated and specialized service agency system's sustainability, including workforce capacity, financial viability, and administrative burden;

(5) recommendations that identify essential services, align expectations with resources, and strengthen the long-term stability of the designated and specialized service agency system; and

(6) an examination of a process by which the designated and specialized service agencies implement new or expanded responsibilities only with a prior agreement on funding, staffing, and operational feasibility.

(c) On or before January 15, 2027, the Agency shall submit a written report to the House Committee on Human Services and to the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare with the results of the study required pursuant this section.

(d)(1) The stakeholder group referenced in subsection (a) of this section shall be composed of the following:

(A) the Secretary of Human Services or designee;

(B) the Commissioner of Mental Health or designee;

(C) the Commissioner of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent or designee;

(D) the Commissioner of Vermont Department of Health or designee;

(E) three representatives, appointed by Vermont Care Partners: one from each division (MH, SUD, UDD)

(F) an individual receiving services from a designated and specialized service agency, appointed by the Speaker of the House; and

(G) a family member of an individual receiving services from a designated and specialized service agency, appointed by the Committee on Committees.

(H) one non-provider representative (for a total of 3) appointed by each of the following; the state program standing committee for adult mental health; the children, adolescent and family mental health state standing committee; and the state standing committee on intellectual and developmental disabilities.

(2) Members of the stakeholder group who are not participating in their professional

capacity shall be entitled to per diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses as permitted under 32 V.S.A. § 1010 for not more than five meetings. These payments shall be made from monies appropriated to the Agency of Human Services.

Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE This act shall take effect on July 1,