

Human Services Bills Voted Out of the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare in 2025

Prepared by the Office of Legislative Counsel

January 9, 2026

Act 9 (H.259): An act relating to preventing workplace violence

- Requires hospitals to implement security plans for preventing workplace violence and managing aggressive behaviors based on results of a security risk assessment
- Requires hospitals to use a workplace violence incident reporting system to document, track, analyze, and evaluate incidents of workplace violence
- Excludes from certificate of need requirements hospital expenditures to implement hospital security plan
- Requires hospitals to report costs of implementing security plan as part of hospital budget review process and requires Green Mountain Care Board to take costs into account when establishing hospital budgets

Act 16 (H.218): An act relating to fiscal year 2026 appropriations from the Opioid Abatement Special Fund

- Makes various fiscal year 2026 appropriations from the Opioid Abatement Special Fund, such as:
 - \$ 1.9m to fund 26 outreach or case management staff positions within the preferred provider network
 - \$1.4m to fund recovery residences certified by the Vermont Alliance for Recovery Residences
 - \$850,000 to fund syringe services
 - \$50,000 to train Vermont's judges on issues related to opioid use disorder and strategies for use in dockets statewide
- Requires the Opioid Settlement Advisory Committee to base its annual recommendations for expenditures from the Special Fund on previously reported outcomes and measurements and to include with its recommendations the corresponding citation for authorized use of the Special Fund
- Requires the Advisory Committee to elect a vice chair from among its nongovernmental members

Act 22 (S.36): An act relating to the delivery and payment of certain services provided through the Agency of Human Services, services for persons who are incapacitated, and Human Services Board proceedings

- Requires the Agency of Human Services (AHS) to provide coverage for medically necessary high-intensity, medically monitored residential treatment episodes and medically necessary low-intensity, clinically managed residential treatment episodes when prescribed by a health care professional employed by a residential program who is practicing within the scope of the health care professional's license and the residential treatment program is participating in Vermont's Medicaid program
- Requires that coverage of these residential treatment episodes be for the entire length of stay prescribed by the health care professional
- Requires AHS to conduct a review of the Medicaid payment model for residential substance use disorder treatment services and submit the results of the review to the General Assembly on or before December 1, 2025

Act 22 (S.36): An act relating to the delivery and payment of certain services provided through the Agency of Human Services, services for persons who are incapacitated, and Human Services Board proceedings (continued)

- Eliminates a repeal that would have prohibited individuals who are incapacitated due to use of alcohol or other drugs from being held at a Department of Corrections' facility
- Requires the Departments of Health and of Mental Health's existing plan to expand services and programming for individuals incapacitated due to use of alcohol or other drugs to prioritize Chittenden County, including the submission of two presentations to the General Assembly on or before February 15, 2026:
 - The first is a joint presentation from the Departments of Health and of Mental Health on efforts to expand services and programming for individuals who are incapacitated due to use of alcohol or other drugs.
 - The second is a presentation from the Department of Corrections on efforts to reinstate the practice of connecting individuals who are in a correctional facility due to incapacitation from alcohol or other drug use with appropriate community-based substance use recovery providers.

Act 22 (S.36): An act relating to the delivery and payment of certain services provided through the Agency of Human Services, services for persons who are incapacitated, and Human Services Board proceedings (continued)

- Requires AHS, in consultation with the Human Services Board, the Office of the Attorney General, each of the Agency's departments with cases before the Human Services Board, community partners, and individuals with lived experience as appellants before the Board, to submit a report by December 15, 2025, with various recommendations on Board proceedings, including:
 - a proposal for attorney training; and
 - a proposal on resolving potential appeals prior to reaching the Board
- Requires the Board, in consultation with AHS, each of the Agency's departments with cases before the Human Services Board, the Office of Attorney General, community partners, and individuals with lived experience as appellants before the Board, to submit a report by December 15, 2025, with various recommendations on Board proceedings, including:
 - a proposal to improve understanding of Board processes and accessibility to appellants; and
 - a proposal for the exchange of periodic feedback as part of a continual quality improvement process

Act 42 (H.401): An act relating to exemptions for food manufacturing establishments

- Creates a new category of food manufacturing establishments, cottage food operations, which refers to the home kitchen or auxiliary kitchen on a person's private property where cottage food products are produced
- Defines "cottage food products" to mean items sold by a cottage food operator that do not require refrigeration or time or temperature controls for safety
- Exempts cottage food operations with annual gross receipts of \$30,000.00 or less from the existing requirement to obtain a license and pay a licensure fee
- Continues to require food manufacturing establishments otherwise exempt from the licensure and licensing fee requirements to submit a licensing exemption filing with the additional requirement that as part of the licensing exemption filing a food service establishment attest to completion of training required by the Department of Health in rule

Act 54 (H.238): An act relating to the phaseout of consumer products containing added perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances

- Amends the State's prohibitions on the sale of consumer goods containing PFAS to include three additional types of consumer products of which the sale or distribution of the product would be banned if the product contained intentionally added PFAS: cleaning products, dental floss, and fluorine treated containers
- Extends the effective date of the prohibition on the sale and distribution of cookware containing intentionally added PFAS to July 1, 2028
- Requires the Secretary of Natural Resources on or before January 15, 2027, to submit to the General Assembly a report regarding the regulation by other states of PFAS in consumer products, including recommendation based on review of regulatory programs in other states on whether Vermont should establish a regulatory program for PFAS in consumer products
- Requires the Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets to submit to the General Assembly on or before January 15, 2033, a recommendation on how to address PFAS in food

Act 54 (H.238): An act relating to the phaseout of consumer products containing added perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (continued)

- Bans the sale or distribution of firefighting personal protective equipment (PPE) containing intentionally added PFAS beginning July 1, 2029, provided that the initial prohibition shall not apply to the sale or distribution of respirators or respirator equipment
- Bans the sale of respirators and respirator equipment containing intentionally added PFAS beginning on July 1, 2032
- Requires that the manufacturer of firefighting station wear provide notice of intentionally added PFAS to buyers until July 1, 2026, when the requirements for the sale or distribution of apparel containing intentionally added PFAS go into effect
- Requires the Agency of Natural Resources to report to the General Assembly on the availability and cost of PPE that does not include PFAS

H.91: An act relating to the Vermont Homeless Emergency Assistance and Responsive Transition to Housing Program

(vetoed)

- Would have established the Vermont Homeless Emergency Assistance and Responsive Transition to Housing (VHEARTH) Program to replace emergency housing provided through the General Assistance Program and the Housing Opportunity Grant Program
- VHEARTH would have provided supportive services, extreme weather event shelters, and emergency shelter to households experiencing homelessness by or through the community action agencies and an organization with specialized experience serving households that have or are currently experiencing domestic or sexual violence
- Would have required the Department for Children and Families and various community partners to develop plans for the implementation of the VHEARTH Program beginning in fiscal year 2026, including a report back to the General Assembly on issues such as proposed performance measures, eligibility for VHEARTH services, intake and assessment procedures, funding allocations, and household participation in case management services
- Would have appropriated \$7 million in fiscal year 2026 to fund the transition from emergency housing through the General Assistance Program and the Housing Opportunity Grant Program to the VHEARTH Program