

S.53

An act relating to recommendations for achieving universal coverage for primary care in Vermont

It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

Sec. 1. UNIVERSAL COVERAGE FOR PRIMARY CARE; REPORT

(a) The Green Mountain Care Board shall convene interested stakeholders with applicable subject matter expertise to develop recommendations on all of the following:

(1) The specific services, including mental health and substance use disorder services, and providers that constitute primary care. The determinations may be based in relevant part on those services on which a health insurance plan imposes a primary care co-payment, as well as those services on which a plan would impose a primary care co-payment in the absence of a federal requirement for first dollar coverage.

(2) How to achieve universal coverage for primary care services for all Vermonters, whether the services are publicly financed or covered by health insurance or other means.

(3) How to make coverage for primary care services affordable for all Vermonters, such as through income-sensitized, State-funded cost-sharing assistance.

(4) How to resolve coordination of benefits issues for individuals with more than one form of health coverage and for health care services that are not considered primary care.

(b) The Office of the Attorney General and the Department of Financial Regulation shall cooperate with and provide legal assistance to the Green Mountain Care Board in identifying and analyzing any potential legal issues with achieving universal coverage for primary care in Vermont and in developing proposals to address any legal issues identified.

(c) The Green Mountain Care Board shall provide updates to the Health Reform Oversight Committee every two months beginning on July 1, 2018 on the Board's progress in developing recommendations and proposals pursuant to this section and may request clarifications and guidance from the Committee as needed.

(d) On or before January 15, 2019, the Green Mountain Care Board and the stakeholders shall provide the recommendations and proposals developed pursuant to this section and any proposals for legislative action to the House Committees on Appropriations and on Health Care and the Senate Committees on Appropriations, on Health and Welfare, and on Finance.

Sec. 2. UNIVERSAL PRIMARY CARE; DRAFT OPERATIONAL PLAN

(a) If the Green Mountain Care Board determines that achieving universal coverage for primary care in Vermont is feasible and that the benefits to

Vermont residents outweigh the estimated financial costs, the Board, in consultation with the Agency of Human Services and other interested stakeholders with applicable subject matter expertise, shall prepare a draft operational plan for achieving universal coverage for primary care based on the recommendations and proposals developed pursuant to Sec. 1 of this act. In determining feasibility, benefits, and cost estimates, the Board shall take into account existing studies indicating the potential savings and improvements to population health from providing access to primary care services.

(b) On or before October 15, 2019, the Green Mountain Care Board shall provide the preliminary draft operational plan developed pursuant to this section, if any, to the Health Reform Oversight Committee. On or before January 15, 2020, the Board shall provide the final draft operational plan to the House Committees on Appropriations and on Health Care and the Senate Committees on Appropriations, on Health and Welfare, and on Finance.

Sec. 3. GREEN MOUNTAIN CARE BOARD RESOURCES;

LEGISLATIVE INTENT

It is the intent of the General Assembly to provide sufficient resources to the Green Mountain Care Board in fiscal years 2019 and 2020 to enable the Board to carry out the duties set forth in Secs. 1 and 2 of this act.

Sec. 4. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on passage.