



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES
A Healthcare Service Agency

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Legislative Session Wrap Up # 1

May 9, 2022

It was a short and wild ride this session! The legislature was very busy and passed quite a few bills that will be of interest to the behavioral health community. Since time was precious this session many of the bills that passed incorporated small bills into large “aircraft carriers bills” that have many parts. I will send out several wrap up memos over the next two weeks in an attempt to provide pertinent information.

This wrap up memo addresses [HB 5506](#), the state budget and the language that implements the budget. It also has some information related to [SB 9](#), which added additional language related to the budget. This year’s budget is the mid-term budget. It makes needed changes to the two-year budget that passed last session. It is an unusual budget as it also allocated federal dollars received by the state to address pandemic related issues.

The dollars allocated for behavioral health from both the general fund and the American Rescue Plan Act cover a wide variety of initiatives including 24/7 mobile crisis, housing supports, police training, military support, respite beds, and peer supports to name a few. Partial funding for implementation of a DMHAS electronic health record was also included in the budget adjustment.

COLA funding for not for profit provider (PNP) staff was also included in the budget. The funding continues last year’s 4% COLA and provides an approximately 5% COLA for this year. Twenty million for one-time funding to be distributed proportionally across state agencies and accounts to stabilize PNP’s was also included. Guidance related to the distribution of new PNP dollars is forthcoming.

State agency staff will receive increased compensation per the negotiated SEABAC agreement. The budget includes the same increased compensation plan for state agency management.

Additional language affecting the behavioral health community is as follows:

- Transfers responsibility for the legalized gambling study from DCP to DMHAS and requires the next study to be completed by August 1, 2023

- Requires Office of Higher Education to establish a program to provide loan reimbursement grants to Department of Public Health (DPH)-licensed health care providers employed full-time as a health care provider in the state. Requires certain other agencies and organizations to provide free menstrual products without stigmatizing the individuals requesting the products. This includes public or private homeless shelters that receive grants from the housing commissioner, in each restroom that is accessible to residents and domestic violence emergency shelters that receive state funding in each restroom that is accessible to residents.
- The bill establishes a 16-member task force to study and make recommendations on certificates of need (CONs) Generally, existing law requires health care facilities to apply for and a CON when proposing to (1) establish a new facility or provide new services, (2) change ownership, (3) purchase or acquire certain equipment, or (4) terminate certain services.
- Annually redirects \$12 million of Tobacco Settlement Fund proceeds from the General Fund to the Tobacco and Health Trust Fund yearly and makes changes to the Fund's legislative reports. The bill requires that the Fund's board recommend disbursements to programs for the fund's statutory purposes (i.e., tobacco use prevention, education, and cessation; substance abuse reduction; and unmet physical and mental health needs of the state). The bill requires the board to report every two years to the Public Health and Appropriations committees including an accounting of unexpended amounts in the fund.
- Requires sellers, or their agents or employees, to request that each person intending to purchase cigarettes or tobacco products present a driver's license or identity card to establish that the person is at least 21 years old.
- Requires the Department of Correction (DOC) commissioner to annually review, evaluate, and make recommendations on substance use disorder and mental health screening, diagnostic, and treatment services available to individuals who are incarcerated, throughout their entire incarceration and reintegrating these individuals into the community in consultation with DMHAS.
- Broadens DPH's Student Loan Repayment Program to require community-based providers to provide, or arrange access to, behavioral health services, in addition to other services currently required (e.g., primary and preventative health services). It also expands the types of primary care clinicians that may be recruited through the program to include psychiatrists, psychologists, licensed clinical social workers, licensed marriage and family therapists, and licensed professional counselors.

I realize this is only a snapshot of a very comprehensive bill. If you have questions or comments please feel free to email me at mary.mason@ct.gov and I will be happy to provide further information.