

2015 Legislative Update

May 12, 2015

Three weeks until the end of session...

Governor's bills:

Enhancing Access to BH Services and Services for Youth with ASD (HB 6847) –

Expands commercial coverage for ASD, helps ensure quality and consistency of ASD services across payers, updates insurance statutes to reflect current federal law, and requires the development of uniform BH utilization and quality data measures across payers.

Substance Abuse and Opioid Overdose Prevention (HB 6856) – Requires continuing education for practitioners on pain management and controlled substance prescribing, strengthens the state's prescription monitoring program; increases access to the life-saving overdose reversal drugs, and reconstitutes the Alcohol and Drug Policy Council.

Transparency of Executive Pay in Certain Hospital Transactions (SB 954) -- Requires reporting of anticipated changes in position or financial gain for board members and senior management in a hospital conversion application and requires reporting of this same information post-merger, on an annual basis, through OHCA's hospital financial review process.

Human Services and Public Health Budget Implementers (HB 6846 and SB 955)

Includes HUSKY adult transition, strengthening LTC rebalancing by extending moratorium on new NH beds and requiring notice when NH residents are becoming Medicaid eligible, statewide rates for hospital inpatient, and moving certain public health programs to the insurance fund.

State agency bills regarding access, quality, prevention, cost, and disparate impact:

Medicaid Coverage for OTC Drugs (HB 6770) – allows Medicaid reimbursement for certain OTC medications and products

Emergency Medical Services (SB 999) – sets for responsibility for prehospital patient care management

Funding for Municipal Health Departments and Health Districts (SB 995) – Limits grant funding to health districts with a FT director, or in the case of a 90+ day vacancy, a waiver of the requirement.

Revisions to the DMHAS statutes (HB 6708) – among other provisions, clarifies and strengthens DMHAS ability to collect data from BH providers

Definitions of Sedation and General Anesthesia (HB 6937) – For dentistry, eliminates “conscious sedation” and replaces it with new definitions for minimal, moderate, and deep sedation.

Passed -- Massage Therapist Qualifications (HB 6794) --allows licensing of new massage therapists by eliminating reference to an exam no longer used.

Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention and Control (HB 6884) – lowers the blood lead level threshold at which local health directors must inform parents about lead poisoning dangers, ways to reduce risks, lead abatement laws, and the child’s potential eligibility for 0-3.

State Payment to Certain Facilities for Reserved Beds (SB 862) – clarifies that the state is not required to pay for beds that are not otherwise available

Definition and Use of the Term Intellectual Disability (HB 6815) – removes reference to mental retardation in statute

Protective Services for Suspected Elderly Abuse Victims (SB 896) – Among other changes, allows DSS to obtain a probate court order in a narrowly defined situation to enter the premises of an elderly person to determine whether they need protective services.

Interpreter Qualifications (HB 6765) – updates and strengthens training and educational requirements for interpreters for deaf persons.

Various revisions to the public health statutes (HB 6987) -- This DPH bill has 29 sections making various changes including allowing out-of-state nurses to temporarily care for a patient in Connecticut for up to 72 hours without obtaining a DPH permit.

Legislative Initiatives:

Childhood Vaccinations (HB 6949) – Requires notarization of religious exemptions and attestation that such parents have reviewed and understand info regarding the risks of immunization and failure to immunize.

Bipartisan Roundtable on Hospital Bills: SBs 807-815. Led by Senator Looney and Senator Fasano, a workgroup was convened during the Fall of 2014 to develop policy

recommendations to ensure continued access to affordable quality care. The group met five times on various topics, including the hospital conversion process, physician practice acquisitions and mergers, and facility fees. As a result nine bills were drafted addressing: expanded oversight of hospital sales, establishment of a statewide health information exchange, transparency regarding cost and quality, facility fees and site neutral reimbursement, surprise billing, tiered networking

Various Insurance Bills. Including establishing a binding arbitration process for contract disputes between hospitals and insurers (SB 249), prohibiting ambulances from collecting payment from a person prior to receiving notice from the insurer that they decline to pay (SB 253) other bills from the insurance committee.

Telehealth (HB 467) and Telemonitoring (HB 6149). These bills require commercial insurance and Medicaid coverage.

Enhanced Screening: Pediatric vision screening (HB 6268), developmental screenings for children (HB 6579), and newborn screening for cytomegalovirus and for globoid cell leukodystrophy.

Behavioral Health Bills. HB 5528 establishes three new behavioral health grant programs, new licensure for behavioral analysts, and expands DCF programs to serve up to age 25. SB 1089 establishes grant programs at DMHAS, requires MH first aid training for school employees, peace officers and EMS, and requires Medicaid rate increases. HB 6269 enhances mental health services for homeless children.

Nursing home minimum staffing levels. (HB 6690)

Various councils, task forces, studies, plans: Physical Activity for School Students, Definition of Surgery, Medicaid Reimbursement for Home Health Care, Nutrition Education, COPD, rare diseases, school nurses, traumatic brain injury, food borne disease outbreaks, services for individuals with intellectual disability, etc.

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