

Human Services Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-6936

AN ACT CONCERNING FUNDING FOR INPATIENT ADDICTION TREATMENT PROVIDERS THAT COVERS ROOM AND BOARD COSTS FOR MEDICAID

Title: ENROLLEES.

Vote Date: 3/5/2025

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 2/20/2025

File No.: 113

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Human Services Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

Under Connecticut's Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Demonstration Waiver, section 20(a), the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) does not cover the room and board expenses incurred by Medicaid patients in SUD residential treatment centers, unless they qualify as an inpatient facility under section 1905(a) of the Social Security Act. The Department of Social Services (DSS) helps compensate these providers using a portion of their annual budget appropriation. This compensation is limited, however, as new or expanding residential treatment service providers are not included. As a result, new residential treatment centers are discouraged from opening new locations, expanding their capacity, or servicing patients on Medicaid as they would lose money doing so. This bill proposes that DSS should be required to cover the room and board costs of all Medicaid recipients and amend the SUD Demonstration Waiver and Medicaid state plan in a manner consistent with federal law to allow for Medicaid coverage in this area.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

[Department of Social Services \(DSS\), Shantelle Varrs, Deputy Commissioner](#); opposes this bill, stating that DSS already funds the costs of room and board of Medicaid recipients, and therefore this bill is not needed.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Connecticut General Assembly, State Representative Gary Turco; supports this bill as it will help his constituents who require more resources to treat their SUDs. Representative Turco also expressed that The Root Center for Advanced Recovery (Root Center), which has operations in New Britain, needs state assistance in the form of room and board reimbursements to continue their SUD treatment centers sustainably. This bill is stated to help organizations such as Root and others that seek to open additional treatment beds to meet the growing need of Connecticut residents with SUD.

Center for Children's Advocacy, Sarah Healy Eagan, JD, Executive Director; supports this bill as it would allow for Medicaid recipients to have access to SUD treatment. Under Federal Medicaid law, Connecticut is required to ensure reasonable and prompt access to medically necessary services for the covered youth. It is stated that because overdose continues to be the leading cause of preventable death of individuals from 18 to 21 years old, failure to provide treatment to prevent these overdoses would violate the state's duties.

Connecticut Community Nonprofit Alliance (The Alliance), Monika Nugent, Public Policy and Advocacy Associate; supports this bill, stating that DSS should amend the SUD Demonstration Waiver to expand the number of inpatient SUD treatment centers that receive reimbursement for room and board expenses. Ms. Nugent recommends, however, that this should be done only through the expansion of the waiver, as there is a concern that seeking additional funding and separating the two different provider types might result in current SUD treatment centers receiving less reimbursement.

Connecticut Department of Aging and Disability Services – Long-term Care Ombudsman Program, Mairead Painter, State Long-Term Care Ombudsman; supports this bill, expressing their experience witnessing a growing number of individuals needing skilled nursing facility care as a result of their SUD. Once released, Ms. Painter states that some struggle accessing inpatient addiction treatment programs as they lack funds to cover the room and board; a problem that can be eased through the implementation of this bill.

Root Center for Advanced Recovery (ROOT), Steven Zickerman, President & CEO; supports this bill, stating that the organization's commitment to offering services to the Medicaid population is unsustainable with the current terms of the SUD Demonstration Waiver. Mr. Zuckerman emphasizes that even with the passage of the bill, organizations such as Root would still lose money offering these services; however, this would be to a lesser extent.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None expressed.

Reported by Danielle Colbath

Date 3/26/2025