
OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 5677 (as amended by House "A")*

AN ACT CONCERNING THE AVAILABILITY OF COMMUNITY VIOLENCE PREVENTION SERVICES UNDER MEDICAID.

SUMMARY

This bill requires the Department of Social Services (DSS) commissioner to amend the state Medicaid plan to provide coverage for community violence prevention services for beneficiaries who have:

1. received medical treatment for an injury sustained from an act of community violence (i.e., an intentional act of interpersonal violence committed in public by someone who is not the victim's family member or intimate partner) and
2. been referred by a certified or licensed health care or social services provider to receive these services from a "certified violence prevention professional" after the provider determined the beneficiary is at a higher risk of retaliation or a violent injury from another act of community violence.

Under the bill, the DSS commissioner must do this by July 1, 2022, provided (1) federal law permits it; (2) federal financial participation is available; and (3) any needed federal approval is obtained, including Medicaid waivers or state plan amendments.

Additionally, the bill establishes training requirements for individuals seeking certification as a "certified violence prevention professional" and requires the Department of Public Health (DPH), by January 1, 2022, to approve at least one accredited training and certification program for these professionals. It also establishes documentation and compliance requirements for entities that employ or contract with these professionals to provide community violence

prevention services.

*House Amendment "A" (1) modifies the (a) definitions of community violence and community violence prevention services and (b) training requirements for certified violence prevention professionals, (2) adds the interpersonal violence definition, (3) requires DPH to approve at least one accredited training program instead of approving an accrediting body to approve these programs, (4) removes the requirement that the DSS commissioner amend the Medicaid state plan in consultation with the DPH commissioner, and (5) adds the provision on title protection for certified violence prevention professionals.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2021

COMMUNITY VIOLENCE PREVENTION SERVICES

The bill defines "community violence prevention services" as evidenced-based, trauma-informed, supportive, and non-psychotherapeutic services provided by a certified violence prevention professional to:

1. promote improved health outcomes and positive behavioral change,
2. prevent injury recidivism, and
3. reduce the likelihood that victims of community violence will commit or promote violence themselves.

Under the bill, these services may be provided within or outside of a clinical setting and may include the provision of the following services to community violence victims: peer support or counseling, mentorship, conflict mediation, crisis intervention, targeted case management, referrals to certified or licensed health care or social services providers, patient education, or screening services.

CERTIFIED VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROFESSIONALS

Training Requirements

Under the bill, a prevention professional (see BACKGROUND) seeking certification as a certified violence prevention professional must complete a DPH-approved accredited training and certification program for certified violence prevention professionals and maintain the certification.

Training and Certification Program

The bill requires DPH, by January 1, 2022, to approve at least one accredited training and certification program for certified violence prevention professionals. The program must include at least 35 hours of initial training and address:

1. the profound effects of trauma and violence and the basics of trauma-informed care;
2. community violence prevention strategies, including conflict mediation and retaliation prevention;
3. case management and advocacy practices; and
4. HIPAA's patient privacy requirements.

Under the bill, the program must also include six hours of continuing education every two years.

Documentation and Compliance

The bill requires any entity that employs or contracts with a certified violence prevention professional to provide community violence prevention services to:

1. maintain documentation that the professional has met the qualifications listed above and
2. ensure that the professional complies with any applicable state or federal laws, regulations, rules, or standards of care.

The bill also specifies that it does not alter the scope of practice of any health care professional or authorize the delivery of health care services in a setting or manner not currently authorized.

Title Protection

The bill prohibits anyone who is not certified as a violence prevention professional under the bill's requirements from using the title "certified violence prevention professional" or any title, words, letters, abbreviations, or insignia indicating or implying that he or she is a certified violence prevention professional.

BACKGROUND

Prevention Professionals

Prevention professionals work in programs that address specific patient needs, such as suicide prevention, violence prevention, alcohol and drug avoidance, and tobacco prevention. They generally complete training specific to the patient population they work with and work in a variety of settings providing various services such as case management, provider referral, and mentorship.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Public Health Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 33 Nay 0 (03/29/2021)