

INTERIM STUDY PROPOSAL 2007-227

REQUESTING THE ARKANSAS LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF THE EIGHTY-SIXTH ARKANSAS GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO REFER TO THE HOUSE AND SENATE INTERIM COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC HEALTH, WELFARE, AND LABOR A STUDY OF THE PROGRAMS, FUNDING, AND CERTIFICATION POLICIES REGARDING REHABILITATION SERVICES FOR PERSONS WITH MENTAL ILLNESS.

WHEREAS, the Children's Behavioral Health Care Commission, having worked for just one (1) year, is only now beginning to get a grasp on the many issues facing mental health services for children across Arkansas; and

WHEREAS, the commission's primary concerns involve quality, consistency, service availability, and additional services that should be included under Arkansas's Rehabilitation Services for Persons with Mental Illness; and

WHEREAS, additional services that the commission has identified for consideration include:

Telemedicine reimbursement for the under twenty-on (21) population; Substance abuse reimbursement through Rehabilitation Services for Persons with Mental Illness; and Specialized care; and

WHEREAS, disparities in reimbursement among Rehabilitation Services for Persons with Mental Illness programs threaten to disrupt services; and

WHEREAS, a flood of new applications for certification as Rehabilitation Services for Persons with Mental Illness providers have been submitted to the Division of Behavioral Health, many of the applications coming from agencies and facilities that already receive reimbursement through the State of Arkansas, but under different licenses, for instance, through the Division of Youth Services, the Office of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention, and the Department of Community Correction; and

WHEREAS, these disparate applications raise concerns for the future

1 health of the statewide system, including (1) funding, shortages of mental
2 health professionals, service saturation in some locations with resulting
3 service shortages in other locations, (2) concerns that the creation of many
4 new provider programs will outpace the System of Care implementation plan
5 approved by the Commission, and (3) that the state's ability to manage and
6 monitor programs will be impaired in the face of the dramatic increase in
7 applications and providers; and

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9 WHEREAS, unlike the Certificate of Need methodology, there is no
10 formula to determine the appropriate level of services necessary to maximize
11 supply and demand for Rehabilitation Services for Persons with Mental
12 Illness; and

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14 WHEREAS, a study should be conducted to consider an immediate freeze on
15 approval of any pending Rehabilitation Services for Persons with Mental
16 Illness Certification Applications; and

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18 WHEREAS, this modified moratorium can also be the gatekeeper to ensure
19 that funding is secured and managed as necessary to properly treat this
20 critical population of children; and

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22 WHEREAS, the interim study can be a guide to managing the
23 Rehabilitation Services for Persons with Mental Illness provider pool to
24 ensure that services are available in the underserved areas of the state,
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26 NOW THEREFORE,

27 BE IT PROPOSED BY THE ARKANSAS LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF THE EIGHTY-SIXTH
28 GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

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30 THAT the Arkansas Legislative Council of the Eighty-Sixth Arkansas
31 General Assembly refer to the House and Senate Interim Committees on Public
32 Health, Welfare, and Labor a study of the programs, funding, and
33 certification policies regarding Rehabilitation Services for Persons with
34 Mental Illness.

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36 Respectfully submitted,

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Senator Jimmy Jeffress
District 24

Filed Date: 07/29/2008 By: MGF/ksw