



## **Summary of Legislation Advanced by Opioid and Other Substance Use Disorders Study Committee October 2019**

The Opioid and Other Substance Use Disorders Study Committee of the Colorado General Assembly heard testimony from stakeholders and concerned stakeholder meetings to draft five proposed bills to improve services related to prevention, harm reduction and treatment of substance use disorders, as well as supports for criminal justice response and support services for recovery for individuals with an opioid or other substance use disorder.

The summary of the five proposed bills presented here demonstrates the board rage of policy actions informed by stakeholders. Each of the draft bills is available on the web page of the [Study Committee](#).

### **Bill 1: Prevention of Substance Use Disorders**

This bill:

- Enhances practices in the health care setting aimed at preventing opioid misuse.
- Ensures that alternatives to opioids with regard to pain management are available to individuals.
- Expands continuing education for opioid prescribers.
- Supports the delivery of prevention services through local public health departments.
- Expands screening, brief intervention and referral to treatment (SBIRT) as a standard of health care.
- Improves the utilization of evidence-based prevention practices and programs.

### **Bill 2: Harm Reduction Substance Use Disorders**

This bill addresses access to the life-saving medication, naloxone:

- Extends civil and criminal immunity for a person who acts in good faith to administer naloxone that is expired to an individual suffering an opiate-related drug overdose.

- Requires health insurance carriers to reimburse a hospital if the hospital provides a covered person with naloxone upon discharge.

This bill promotes public health through preventing the spread of blood-borne pathogens:

- Promotes public health safety by providing permissive language for pharmacies to provide syringes.
- Removes a regulatory barrier to operating syringe exchange programs.
- Provides ongoing funding for harm reduction programming in public health.

### **Bill 3: Substance Use Disorders Treatment in the Criminal Justice System**

This bill:

- Requires that incarcerated individuals with an opioid use disorder receive medication-assisted treatment, continuity of care and community resources prior to release.
- Allows police stations, sheriff's offices and fire stations to receive any controlled substance for disposal and refer individuals with a substance use disorder to treatment.
- Allows for sealing of arrest and criminal records if a person has entered into or successfully completed a substance use disorders treatment program.
- Appropriates money to criminal justice diversion programs.

### **Bill 4: Treatment Opioid & Other Substance Use Disorders**

This bill addresses a variety of measures to improve treatment services for individuals with an opioid of other substance use disorder.

This bill requires insurance carriers to:

- Provide coverage for the treatment of substance use disorders in accordance with the American Society of Addiction Medicine;
- Provide coverage for naloxone, without prior authorization and without imposing any deductible, copayment, coinsurance, or other cost-sharing requirement; and
- Report to the commissioner of insurance on the number of in-network providers who are licensed to prescribe medication-assisted treatment for substance use disorders.

This bill increases access to treatment through the following:

- Authorizes the commissioner of insurance to review and revise the essential health benefits package for medication-assisted treatment.
- Prohibits denying access to medical or substance use disorder treatment services, including recovery services, to persons who are participating in prescribed medication-

assisted treatment provided by a recovery residence and by entities contracting with the Office of Behavioral Health.

- Authorizes pharmacies to receive an enhanced dispensing fee for the administration of all injectable medications for medication-assisted treatment.

This bill increases capacity for treatment providers and agencies through the following:

- Increases funding to the Colorado Health Service Corps Fund for loan forgiveness and scholarships for individuals serving in health care workforce shortage areas of Colorado.
- Continues the grant writing program to aid local communities in need of assistance to access federal and state money to address opioid and other substance use disorders in their communities.

This bill addresses transparency and improved quality of care through the following:

- Requires managed care entities to provide coordination of care for the full continuum of substance use disorder treatment and recovery and requires managed service organizations to update community assessments every 2 years.
- Commissions a study of the state child care and treatment study and a final report with findings and recommendations concerning gaps in family-centered substance use disorder treatment.

## **Bill 5: Substance Use Disorder Recovery**

This bill:

- Provides assistance with access to recovery residences.
- Expands the individual employment placement and support program
- Create the recovery support services grant program for recovery community organizations.
- Supports individuals in recovery with peer coaching or peer specialist training.
- Directs the Center for Research into Substance Use Disorder Prevention, Treatment to conduct a study of relapse in recovery to inform a state plan the delivery of treatment services across the continuum of care.
- Authorizes the statewide perinatal substance use data linkage project related to the incidence of prenatal substance exposure or related infant and family health and human service outcomes as an ongoing project.
- Modifies how child abuse, neglect, or dependency is determined in situations involving alcohol or substance exposure.

- Continues the Opioid and Other Substance Use Disorders Study Committee for an additional 4 years, meeting every other year beginning in 2021.
- Requires the State Substance Abuse Trend and Response Task Force to convene stakeholders to review progress on bills introduced by the study committee and passed by the general assembly and generating policy recommendations related to opioid and other substance use disorders.