

ST. TAMMANY PARISH COUNCIL

RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION COUNCIL SERIES NO: C-6346

COUNCIL SPONSOR: LORINO/COOPER

PROVIDED BY: COUNCIL OFFICE

A RESOLUTION URGING THE STATE OF LOUISIANA TO SEEK AND OBTAIN AN SMI/SED MEDICAID DEMONSTRATION WAIVER UNDER SECTION 1115(A) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT TO ALLOW MEDICAID REIMBURSEMENT FOR INPATIENT TREATMENT OF SERIOUS MENTAL ILLNESS IN HOSPITALS AND PSYCHIATRIC FACILITIES.

WHEREAS, the decades-long exclusion of Medicaid payments for Institutions for Mental Diseases (IMDs) is a contentious feature of our nation's mental health system, prohibiting the use of federal Medicaid funds for care provided to most patients in mental health and substance use residential treatment facilities with over 16 beds; and

WHEREAS, this prohibition dates back to the original Medicaid legislation and was meant to encourage a transition from institutional warehousing of the mentally ill to community-based treatment; and

WHEREAS, in actuality the prohibition creates a major barrier for those with severe mental illness, as residential and inpatient treatment are critical components in the continuum of psychiatric care; and

WHEREAS, as of November 2017, states may apply for a waiver of the IMD exclusion for individuals with substance use disorder (SUD), and as of November 2018, for individuals with serious mental illness (SMI). Specifically, the waiver allows Medicaid to reimburse IMDs with more than 16 beds for patients with mental illnesses; and

WHEREAS, a number of states have since pursued these waivers to help increase bed capacity. Louisiana has obtained an IMD waiver for SUD, but has not yet requested an amendment to also include SMI; and

WHEREAS, persons in crisis or in need of acute stabilization may require the type of structured inpatient treatment that IMDs can provide, and the Medicaid program is a crucial source of mental health funding; and

WHEREAS, lifting the IMD exclusion could help lessen the access and funding gaps between outpatient systems and more acute levels of care, reducing the psychiatric bed shortage; and

WHEREAS, the argument that reducing funds for inpatient care will reduce rates of institutionalization ignores the forced institutionalization of seriously mentally ill individuals in jails and prisons as well as the inappropriate use of emergency departments and unspecialized hospital beds; and

WHEREAS, many people in need of treatment are instead being warehoused in jails precisely because there are often no treatment options available to them in the community; and

WHEREAS, appropriate hospital capacity will enhance the provision of outpatient care; and

WHEREAS, by seeking an amendment to its existing waiver, the State could apply now for this additional funding to help finally complete our mental health system, end some of the misery perpetuated by antiquated policy, and, over time, curtail the number of people with mental illness in our jails, prisons, and state hospitals.

THE PARISH OF ST. TAMMANY HEREBY RESOLVES that the State is hereby asked to seek an amendment to its existing IMD waiver to extend such funding to those with serious mental illness.

THIS RESOLUTION HAVING BEEN SUBMITTED TO A VOTE, THE VOTE THEREON WAS AS FOLLOWS:

MOVED FOR ADOPTION BY: \_\_\_\_\_ SECONDED BY: \_\_\_\_\_

YEAS: \_\_\_\_\_

NAYS: \_\_\_\_\_

ABSTAIN: \_\_\_\_\_

ABSENT: \_\_\_\_\_

THIS RESOLUTION WAS DECLARED ADOPTED ON THE 1 DAY OF OCTOBER, 2020, AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL, A QUORUM OF THE MEMBERS BEING PRESENT AND VOTING.

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MICHAEL R. LORINO, JR. , COUNCIL CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:

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KATRINA L. BUCKLEY, COUNCIL CLERK