Legislative Briefing

OHA Health Policy Action

Your guide to proposed health legislation, what we think about it, and what we're doing about it.

March 2013

S.B. No. 374; *An Act Requiring Behavioral Assessment for Children*

What is this bill about?

S.B. 374 will require each pupil in public school at grades 6, 8, 10 and 12 and each home-schooled child at ages 12, 14 and 17 to have a confidential behavioral assessment. The results of the behavioral assessments shall be disclosed only to the child's parent or guardian, and each health care provider performing the assessment to complete the appropriate form supplied by the State Board of Education verifying that the child has received the assessment.

Studies estimate the direct and indirect costs of mental health care range from $34 billion to $57 billion annually. In addition, individuals suffering with severe mental illness die an average of 25 years sooner than those without mental disease.

It is estimated that 19.5% of children present with some degree of psychiatric conditions. Early detection and intervention can significantly change the trajectory of an individual's illness, whether it be physical or mental. Identifying children with behavioral health challenges early, before their illness has taken root, can enable effective treatment at an early stage with a far greater likelihood of positive benefits.

What are the implications of this bill for healthcare consumer advocacy?

This legislation will likely result in significantly better outcomes for families, and reduced utilization over the long term.

Please refer all media, agency, and legislator inquiries to Vicki Veltri

Talking Points

1. OHA is aware of this proposed legislation and submitted written public testimony **in support** of this bill.
2. This legislation will facilitate early detection and intervention of mental health issues at a time when treatment may be immeasurably more effective.
3. OHA supports this legislation based on the principles of access to quality healthcare, evidence-based improvements to our healthcare system, and consumer maximization of value for their health insurance premiums.

OHA represents the collective voice of 3.5 million healthcare consumers. For our state to be competitive, our people must be healthy. Our mission is to • assure managed care consumers have access to medically necessary healthcare • educate consumers about their rights and responsibilities under health insurance plans • inform legislators of problems consumers face in accessing care and propose solutions to those problems.