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

H.B. No. 6557; AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM REVIEW AND INVESTIGATIONS COMMITTEE CONCERNING THE HEALTH CARRIER UTILIZATION REVIEW AND GRIEVANCE PROCESS.

What is this bill about?

H.B. 6557 will implement the recommendations of the Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee concerning the health carrier utilization review and grievance process. Requests for treatment for substance use and associated co-morbidities will at last be assessed with standard and clinically appropriate criteria by an experienced and clinically appropriate provider resulting in consumer's requests receiving the level of scrutiny and consideration that they are due.

We recognize the bill is limited in that it doesn't eliminate the burden of mental illness, but the recommendation that prospective or concurrent utilization review requests involving treatment for a substance use or co-occurring disorder be treated as urgent care requests acknowledges the clinical reality that, in these cases, delays in the onset of treatment may be the difference between recovery or relapse.

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

By enhancing the notice to consumers about assistance available to them, as well as the opportunities for appealing the adverse determination and their chance of success, the utilization review process will empower consumers.

Talking Points

1. OHA is aware of this proposed legislation and submitted written public testimony **in support** of this bill.
2. This legislation will increase the urgency of mental health services.
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.

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

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.