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. 170 *An Act Concerning a Pilot Program to Provide Inmates with Health Care Upon Release From Incarceration*

What is this bill about?

S.B. 170 will implement a pilot program to provide inmates, upon release from incarceration, with a health care plan that includes a thirty-day supply of medication, initiated applications for health care benefits and identification of a primary care provider.

Recently released inmates face many challenges, including acquiring appropriate housing, employment, and reintegrating into society. These difficulties are often exacerbated by mental illness. Studies consistently demonstrate that a significant number of inmates, more than half, suffer from mental illness.

Releasing these individuals into this complex situation without an appropriate medical and societal safety net greatly increases the risk for recidivism.

By ensuring that inmates have continuing access to treatment and medication upon release from prison, we can give them a far greater opportunity to successfully rejoin society and realize their full potential.

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

Our office strives to ensure that health care services are available and adequate for all individuals, particularly those at high risk for mental illness.

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 be an excellent first step in extending appropriate care to this high risk group of recently released inmates.
3. OHA supports this legislation based on the principles of access to quality healthcare and evidence-based improvements to our healthcare system.

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.