

Senate Executive Departments and Administration Committee

Kevin Condict 271-7875

HB 507-FN, relative to the timeline for credentialing of mental health care providers.

Hearing Date: April 9, 2025

Time Opened: 9:40 a.m.

Time Closed: 9:48 a.m.

Members of the Committee Present: Senators Pearl, McGough, Altschiller and Reardon

Members of the Committee Absent : Senator Gannon

Bill Analysis: This bill requires health carriers to process credentialing applications by mental health providers within 30 days of submission of a complete application.

Sponsors:

Rep. Gregg

Rep. Grossman

Rep. Kuttab

Who supports the bill: Rep. Carol McGuire (Merr. 27), Rebecca Sartor (Lifestance), Rep. Jaci Grote (Rock. 24), Paula Rogers (AHIP), Karina Bonilla (NHPA), Lynn Stanley (NASWNH), Michelle Heaton (NHID), Commissioner DJ Bettencourt (NHID), Holloway Testerman, Claire Houston, Laura Sheridan, Christine Powers, Lissa Mascio (OCA), Melissa Doucette, Sarahlynn Williams, Hannah Smith, Bianca Gentil (Waypoint), and Sarah McCarthy.

Who opposes the bill: Daniel Richardson.

Who is neutral on the bill: None.

Summary of testimony presented:

Representative Alicia Gregg, Hillsborough 7

- Rep. Gregg introduced House Bill 507-FN.
- Rep. Gregg said there are serious challenges in ensuring adequate and timely mental and behavioral healthcare services.
- Rep. Gregg said that in September 2024 a report from the New Hampshire Behavioral Health Workforce Center at Dartmouth noted workforce shortages in

New Hampshire's mental health sector have reached terrible levels. She said people are not getting sufficient help.

- Rep. Gregg stated that a lack of mental health professionals makes it difficult to access services.
- Rep. Gregg said this bill requires health carriers to process credentialing applications by mental health providers within thirty days of submission. The bill helps to address a bottleneck with onboarding mental healthcare providers, which can take months.
- Rep. Gregg explained that the current law requires health carriers to credential primary care physicians within thirty days of receiving an application. This bill would extend that requirement to mental healthcare providers.
- Rep. Gregg said the bill was amended in the House after a recommendation from Commissioner Bettencourt. The amendment took out the second paragraph, which just complicated the bill.
- Rep. Gregg said this bill would help quicken the pace at which mental health providers are onboarded.
- Rep. Gregg quoted Governor Ayotte's inaugural speech, highlighting the importance of mental healthcare.

Michelle Heaton, New Hampshire Insurance Department

- Ms. Heaton said this bill amends RSA 420-J, which is the managed care law, with respect to provider credentialing standards. She said that in RSA 420-J there are certain timelines.
- Ms. Heaton said that under current statute mental health providers are classified as specialists so there is a forty-five-day period by which the health insurance company must process the credentialing application. This bill shortens that timeline to thirty days and puts mental health providers in the same classification as primary care physicians.
- Sen. McGough asked if there is a definition of "mental health provider" in statute.
 - o Ms. Heaton said she does not believe there is.
- Sen. McGough asked Ms. Heaton if the legislature should define "mental health providers."
 - o Ms. Heaton said she does not believe that it is necessary. She said the term is well understood when it comes to credentialing. She said that a person must specify what they are getting credentialed for when submitting an application. She said it is operational as written, and that carriers and the industry would understand.

Paula Rogers, America's Health Insurance Plans

- Ms. Rogers explained that America's Health Insurance Plans (AHIP) is a trade association of health insurers. She explained these are groups like Anthem, Sigma, and Harvard Pilgrim.
- Ms. Roger said AHIP participated in the House discussion of this bill. She said that they support the amendment.
- Ms. Rogers said it is important to remember there is a shortage with mental health providers. She said that over the last ten years there has been a lot of interest in integrating medical practices to include mental health practitioner access. She said that with that integration, it seemed reasonable to be processing certifications at the same tempo as would happen with a primary care provider.
- Ms. Rogers said there is a shortage of practitioners certified by OPLC, and that the delivery of care is fragmented. She said they want the integrated model of a primary care physician working with easy access to referral to mental health services.

KC

Date Hearing Report completed: April 11, 2025