

SB 298-FN - AS INTRODUCED

2025 SESSION

25-1166

05/02

SENATE BILL ***298-FN***

AN ACT relative to sober living house certification and operational standards.

SPONSORS: Sen. Avar, Dist 12

COMMITTEE: Executive Departments and Administration

ANALYSIS

This bill requires sober living houses to be certified by the New Hampshire Coalition of Recovery Residents, to verify resident eligibility, and to retain a paid house manager. The bill provides enforcement authority to the municipality in which the house is located and to the department of health and human services.

Explanation: Matter added to current law appears in ***bold italics***.
 Matter removed from current law appears ~~[in brackets and struckthrough]~~
 Matter which is either (a) all new or (b) repealed and reenacted appears in regular type.

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Twenty Five

AN ACT relative to sober living house certification and operational standards.

Be it Enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court convened:

1 1 New Chapter; Planning and Zoning; Sober Living House Certification and Operational
2 Standards. Amend RSA by inserting after chapter 674 the following new chapter:

3 CHAPTER 674-A

4 SOBER LIVING HOUSE CERTIFICATION AND OPERATIONAL STANDARDS

5 674-A:1 Definitions.

6 I. "Sober living house" means a residential property that provides a structured, alcohol- and
7 drug-free living environment for individuals recovering from substance use disorders.

8 II. "House manager" means an individual employed by the sober living house to oversee
9 daily operations and ensure compliance with applicable laws and certification standards.

10 674-A:2 Certification Requirement.

11 I. All sober living houses operating within the state of New Hampshire shall obtain and
12 maintain certification from the New Hampshire Coalition of Recovery Residents (NH CORR).
13 Certification shall comply with the standards set forth by NH CORR to ensure adherence to best
14 practices for recovery residences.

15 II. Non-certified sober living houses shall not be eligible to apply for or receive zoning
16 exceptions, variances, or waivers under state or municipal law.

17 III. Existing sober living houses operating without certification on the effective date of this
18 section shall obtain certification from NH CORR within 180 days of the effective date. Failure to
19 achieve certification within this period shall result in penalties as provided in RSA 674-A:6 and may
20 subject the property to additional enforcement actions, including cessation of operations.

21 674-A:3 Resident Eligibility Verification.

22 I. Prior to admitting any resident, a sober living house operator shall verify that the
23 individual has successfully completed or is actively participating in a recognized rehabilitation
24 program for substance use disorders.

25 II. The sober living house operator is required to maintain records of such verification for all
26 current and past residents for a minimum of 3 years following their departure.

27 III. The department of health and human services shall have the right to request proof of
28 these records at any time. Failure to provide documentation within a reasonable time frame, as
29 determined by the department, may result in penalties as provided in RSA 674-A:6.

30 674-A:4 Paid House Manager Requirement.

1 I. Each sober living house shall employ a paid house manager who is not a current or former
2 resident of the sober living house.

3 II. The house manager shall be responsible for overseeing daily operations, ensuring
4 compliance with certification standards, and maintaining a safe and structured environment for
5 residents.

6 674-A:5 Enforcement and Compliance.

7 I. Municipalities shall require proof of certification, resident eligibility verification, and
8 house manager employment as conditions for granting zoning approval or other permits related to
9 the operation of a sober living house.

10 II. The department of health and human services shall establish a process for auditing
11 compliance with this chapter and investigating complaints of non-compliance.

12 674-A:6 Penalties for Noncompliance.

13 I. Property owners operating sober living houses found to be in violation of any provision of
14 this chapter shall be subject to financial penalties.

15 II. Penalties shall be levied as follows:

16 (a) A fine of \$1,000 for the first violation.

17 (b) A fine of \$5,000 for each subsequent violation.

18 III. The department of health and human services may impose additional sanctions,
19 including the suspension or revocation of certifications or permits, as deemed appropriate.

20 674-A:7 Transition Period for Existing Non-Certified Sober Living Houses.

21 I. Sober living houses operating as of the effective date of this section without certification
22 from NH CORR shall have 180 days to obtain certification.

23 II. During the transition period, these houses shall demonstrate good faith efforts toward
24 achieving certification, including initiating the certification process and meeting all applicable
25 requirements.

26 III. After the transition period, any sober living house operating without certification shall
27 be deemed in violation of this chapter and subject to penalties under RSA 674-A:6.

28 2 Effective Date. This act shall take effect 90 days after its passage.

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**SB 298-FN- FISCAL NOTE
AS INTRODUCED**

AN ACT relative to sober living house certification and operational standards.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Due to time constraints, the Office of Legislative Budget Assistant is unable to provide a fiscal note for this bill at this time. When completed, the fiscal note will be forwarded to the Senate Clerk's Office.

AGENCIES CONTACTED:

Department of Health and Human Services