

PLEASE NOTE: Legislative Information **cannot** perform research, provide legal advice, or interpret Maine law. For legal assistance, please contact a qualified attorney.

**An Act To Require Health Insurance Carriers and the
MaineCare Program To Cover the Cost of Transition Services
To Bridge the Gap between High School and Independence**

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 22 MRSA §3174-WW is enacted to read:

§ 3174-WW. Transitional behavioral and mental health services for students after graduation

For the purpose of easing the transition to independence of children receiving behavioral and mental health services in high school after graduation, the department shall provide reimbursement under the MaineCare program for outreach to and case management for patients who are graduating from high school or have recently graduated from high school and who are having difficulty complying with treatment, including coverage for clinic visits and for behavioral and mental health services for prevention of and continuation of treatment for mental health conditions and the avoidance of hospitalization.

Sec. 2. 24-A MRSA §4320-I is enacted to read:

§ 4320-I. Transitional behavioral and mental health services for students after graduation

For the purpose of easing the transition to independence of children receiving behavioral and mental health services in high school after graduation, a carrier shall provide coverage for outreach to and case management for patients who are graduating from high school or have recently graduated from high school and who are having difficulty complying with treatment, including coverage for clinic visits and for behavioral and mental health services for prevention of and continuation of treatment for mental health conditions and the avoidance of hospitalization.

Sec. 3. Transition services. The Department of Health and Human Services shall require each provider of behavioral and mental health services for children to establish or participate in so-called bridge teams for the purpose of ensuring continuity of care for students receiving behavioral and mental health services who graduate from high school. The bridge teams shall conduct outreach and identify students prior to graduation who are likely to be in need of behavioral and mental health services after graduation, develop plans to meet those students' needs after graduation, facilitate access to services and coordinate the continuance of care for those students after graduation. When developing plans for students, the bridge teams shall focus on prevention, continuity of treatment and avoidance of hospitalization.

SUMMARY

This bill requires the Department of Health and Human Services to require providers of behavioral and mental health services for children to establish or participate in so-called bridge teams for the purpose

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of ensuring continuity of care for students receiving behavioral and mental health services who graduate from high school and are likely to be in need of such services following graduation. The bill also requires MaineCare and private health insurance carriers to provide coverage for such services.