



SENATE OF PENNSYLVANIA BILL SUMMARY

House Bill 478 Printer's No. 502

Prime Sponsor: Pickett
Committee: Health and Human Services

SYNOPSIS:

Enacts the Outpatient Psychiatric Oversight Act (the "Act"). The Act specifies the number of hours that a psychiatrist or other advanced practice professional must be on site at an outpatient psychiatric clinic.

SUMMARY:

The Act provides that an outpatient psychiatric clinic must have a psychiatrist on site for two hours per week for each full-time equivalent treatment staff member. However, fifty percent of the required time may be provided by other advanced practice professionals specializing in behavioral health who have prescriptive authority in Pennsylvania.

The Act also specifically permits telepsychiatry services but provides that such services cannot be used to satisfy the time requirements required by the Act.

The Act also requires the Department of Human Services to promulgate necessary regulations.

Among other terms, the Act defines the following:

- "Advanced practice professional." A registered, licensed or certified health care practitioner who has gained additional specialized knowledge, skills and experience through a program of study in that specialty.
- "Full-time equivalent." Thirty-seven and one-half hours per week.
- "Outpatient psychiatric clinic." A nonresidential treatment setting in which psychiatric, psychological, social, educational and other related services are provided under medical supervision. It is designed for the evaluation and treatment of individuals of any age with mental illness or emotional distress. Outpatient services are provided on a planned and regularly scheduled basis.
- "Psychiatrist." A physician who has completed at least three years of a residency in psychiatry and is licensed to practice psychiatry in Pennsylvania.
- "Telepsychiatry." The practice of medicine in the specialty field of psychiatry using electronic communications, information technology or other means between a provider in one location and a patient in another. The term does not, however, include:
 - An audio only telephone conversation
 - Emails or instant messages
 - A facsimile transmission

Effective Date: 60 days

BILL HISTORY:

In the House:

Referred to HEALTH, Feb. 14, 2017

Final passage, March 22, 2017

In the Senate

Referred to HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, March 24, 2017

Prepared by: Cortez 11/9/2017