



August 29, 2018

Insurance Coverage for Residential Drug Treatment

Last week, we took a big step in Illinois' approach to the treatment of substance abuse disorder. Traditionally, health insurance policies have not covered residential treatment for people with substance abuse disorders. But, after the General Assembly, with broad bipartisan support, passed legislation that I introduced, Governor Rauner signed House Bill 5868 into law last week, creating Public Act 100-1065.

Public Act 100-1065 states that health insurance policies may provide coverage for residential extended care services and supports or recovery homes for persons with substance use disorders who are at risk of a relapse following discharge from a health care clinic, federally qualified health center, hospital withdrawal management program or any other licensed withdrawal management program, or hospital emergency department. Although this legislation does not require or mandate insurance policies to provide this type of coverage, this legislation allows them to do so, and I hope this legislation will strongly encourage them to include this coverage in the insurance policies that they offer.

This legislation was written with the input of many community stakeholders, including A Safe Haven. A special salute goes to Neli Vasquez Rowland and Brian Rowland, co-founders of A Safe Haven, for their support and promotion of this legislation. A Safe Haven is a leader in providing innovative residential substance use disorder treatment services which includes opportunities for case management, training and employment. According to Vasquez-Rowland, with the signing of this legislation, "[w]e now have the unique ability to simultaneously provide publicly and privately insured populations access to services on both ends of the spectrum, including a proactive front-end approach to prevent catastrophic consequences like job loss, homelessness and high emergency and criminal justice related costs and potential loss of life; and on the back end to help transform the lives of those caught up the system and get them back on track; [this] promises to be our state's best approach to help heal the root causes of addiction and get people back on track in other areas of their lives as well."

Recovery housing, as identified in this legislation, will be administered by a community-based agency that is licensed by or under contract with the Department of Human Services, Division of Substance Use Prevention and Recovery, and several quality indicators are part of this legislation to ensure that the services provided in recovery housing is of the highest quality and the most useful for the person in recovery.

Sincerely,

La Shawn K. Ford
State Representative-Eighth District