

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

April 20, 2018

The Honorable Seema Verma
Administrator
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Dear Administrator Verma:

We are writing in support of the Substance Use Disorder Treatment and Recovery Access Section 1115(a) Demonstration Waiver submitted by the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services on April 9, 2018. This waiver will allow New Hampshire to provide Medicaid payments for individuals receiving substance use disorder services in an Institution for Mental Disease (IMD).

As you know, New Hampshire is currently facing an opioid crisis that is impacting individuals, families and communities throughout the state. Fortunately, New Hampshire was one of the states that chose to expand its Medicaid program through the Affordable Care Act, which has helped individuals experiencing substance use disorders access treatment. At present, approximately 7,500 individuals receive treatment on a quarterly basis in New Hampshire, partially thanks to our expanded Medicaid program. However, despite this necessary increased access to much needed treatment, New Hampshire has seen limited availability of treatment to meet the demand.

Currently, providers who choose to limit their capacity to sixteen beds are many times forced to discharge Medicaid patients prematurely to comply with the IMD rule and to avoid providing uncompensated care. The Substance Use Disorder Treatment and Recovery Access Waiver will allow Medicaid eligible individuals to receive residential substance use disorder treatment in an IMD for as long as medically necessary.

While there are large capacity challenges faced by the entire New Hampshire SUD treatment system, the limitation is even more prevalent for the adolescent (under 18) population. In 2016, the New Hampshire legislature passed HB517 which required the state to re-develop excess capacity at the existing Sununu Youth Service Center (SYSC). This expansion of the SYSC to a 36-bed residential SUD treatment facility for adolescents under 18 years old is a positive step in helping to stem the tide of the opioid crisis. The initial sixteen beds for the program will be available immediately upon opening in July 2018, with the remaining 20 beds hopefully opening upon the approval of this waiver.

Given the State's opioid crisis and significant need for continued access to treatment services, we ask that you approve New Hampshire's Substance Use Disorder Treatment and Recovery Access Section 1115(a) Demonstration Waiver.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



JEANNE SHAHEEN
United States Senator



MARGARET WOOD HASSAN
United States Senator



CAROL SHEA-PORTER
United States Representative



ANN McLANE KUSTER
United States Representative