

SENATE BILL 7014

By Yarbro

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 33 and Title 71, relative to services for persons with mental health needs.

WHEREAS, this General Assembly recognizes that Section 1115 of the Social Security Act gives the Secretary of Health and Human Services the authority to approve experimental, pilot, or demonstration projects to give states additional flexibility to design and improve state Medicaid programs in order to allow the Secretary to evaluate state-specific policy approaches to better serve Medicaid populations; and

WHEREAS, housing presents a unique challenge to Tennessee's Medicaid population in light of ever-increasing mental health needs; and

WHEREAS, a Section 1115 waiver to provide housing solutions for Tennesseans in need would greatly assist Tennessee's Medicaid population with such challenges; now, therefore,

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 71, Chapter 5, Part 1, is amended by adding the following as a new section:

(a) No later than December 31, 2023, the bureau of TennCare shall submit to the federal centers for medicare and medicaid services an application for a research and demonstration waiver under Section 1115 of the federal Social Security Act to provide housing solutions for Tennesseans in need of mental health services, subject to appropriation by the general assembly and the terms and conditions imposed by the waiver.

(b) The director of TennCare shall ensure that the waiver application submitted pursuant to subsection (a) includes the requirement that TennCare provide the following:

(1) Rent or temporary housing for up to six (6) months for individuals with mental health disabilities or disorders, or who are experiencing other mental health challenges and who are:

(A) Transitioning out of institutional care or congregate settings, including, but not limited to, nursing facilities, large group homes, congregate residential settings, institutions for mental diseases, correctional facilities, and acute care hospitals;

(B) Homeless, at risk of homelessness, or transitioning out of an emergency shelter as defined in 24 CFR 91.5; or

(C) Youth transitioning out of the child welfare system, including foster care; and

(2) Traditional respite services, day habilitation programs and sobering centers, pre-tenancy and tenancy sustaining services, housing transition navigation services, and one-time transition and moving costs.

SECTION 2. This act takes effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.