

PUBLIC POLICY BRIEFS

SISTERS *of* CHARITY HEALTH SYSTEM



Improving Mental Health Access from the Emergency Department Act of 2021

Issue Overview

There has been an increasing amount of awareness surrounding mental health in the United States. In 2014, it is reported that the spending on mental health was \$221 billion, which comes from the previous aversion we held towards the discussion of mental health. While it is estimated that there are 44 million adults in the United States are living with a mental illness, people who receive the proper care for this are in the minority. In a more recent study, it was revealed that the rate of psychiatric consultation for medical inpatients was below 4%.

With the current high demand for mental healthcare, the system used in the past must be amended. With that being said, this will not be a simple fix. Not only will the system have to allow for earlier recognition of mental illness, but it will also have to provide lasting coordination of care for the patient.

The House of Representatives has set a bill in motion regarding the mental health accessibility in emergent situations. The details of that bill are outlined below.

House of Representatives Bill H.R. 1205

Improving Mental Health Access from the Emergency Department Act of 2021

This bill awards grants to ensure the implementation of innovative approaches to the attainment of correct and appropriate care after one experiences an acute mental health episode that has presented for help in an emergency department

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This bill will allow for better treatment of individuals after they have experienced an extreme mental health episode• The bill proposes the allocation of \$15,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2022 through 2026• The bill has bipartisan support and the sponsor of the bill has a good track record	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The grant is only available to hospitals that meet a set of requirements, so areas that could need more mental health resources might not receive them• All bills with similar language have failed in previous sessions with this legislature

Current Status

This bill was passed by the House of Representatives on May 12, 2021. The bill is waiting further approval and implementation in the Senate.

What does this mean for us at The Sisters of Charity Health System?

As a catholic ministry, we believe access to health care is a fundamental right to all. We applaud efforts to increase access to mental health services during a psychiatric crisis. As St. Vincent Charity Medical Center provides one of two psychiatric emergency departments in the state of Ohio, we know the value of providing the right care during a psychiatric crisis. We are committed to collaborating with others to bring God's love and healing presence to those in need. With such a high population suffering from mental illness, we support creative ways to ensure access to care in times of crisis.

What does this mean for you, your family, or your community?

This bill will allow for people who are suffering to get the proper care during a time of crisis. Having appropriate resources for individuals, families and communities can be life-saving.



SISTERS of CHARITY
HEALTH SYSTEM

A Ministry of the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine