



State of Vermont
Agency of Human Services
280 State Drive, Center Building
Waterbury, VT 05671-1000
[phone] 802-241-0440
[fax] 802-241-0450
www.humanservices.vermont.gov

Date: June 28, 2018

Re: Public comments received for GCR 18-051: Brattleboro Retreat Inpatient Psychiatric Services.

Comment:

Please see letter below from the Brattleboro Retreat.

Response:

The State of Vermont (The State) is currently experiencing a crisis in its mental health system. The State, in partnership with organizations statewide, is working hard to care for Vermonters who need services today while preparing to provide greater access to the mental health system in the future. The Brattleboro Retreat (The Retreat) is a key partner in these efforts.

The State agrees that The Retreat's role in Vermont's mental health system has grown since Tropical Storm Irene, and Medicaid has become a larger portion of the Retreat's patient mix. Additionally, the State has proposed partnering with The Retreat to expand access, including 12 new level 1 inpatient beds, the highest level of inpatient psychiatric care in Vermont.

The State considered The Retreat's comments to the proposed rate. Additionally, the State has reviewed The Retreat's financial statements and the cost of providing care and future investments to increase access. The State agrees that an increased rate is justified at this time to (a) continue operations as a critical member of Vermont's health care system while (b) expanding to meet future needs. Accordingly, the State will change the proposed base rate from \$1319.89 to a base rate of \$1,425.00. The State believes that this level of reimbursement would create conditions where The Retreat can maintain existing capacity, pursue plans for the additional 12 level 1 inpatient beds, and establish a sound financial foundation to accomplish both these goals.

An investment in rates must be accompanied by accountability. The State and The Retreat will execute a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that resolves past issues in claims processing while setting mutual commitment to ensure future partnership, service, and accountability. Furthermore, the MOU will require an annual rate conference between the State and The Retreat to review these rates. The State will continue to ensure that Vermonters have access to the services they need while executing its fiduciary responsibility to taxpayers.



Brattleboro Retreat

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION CARE

June 27, 2018

AHS Medicaid Policy Unit
280 State Drive, Center Building
Waterbury VT 05671-1000

In response to the proposed change to the Brattleboro Retreat's Inpatient Prospective Payment System psychiatric base per diem rate, the Brattleboro Retreat would like to offer the following comments for consideration.

Since Tropical Storm Irene the patient population and composition of the Retreat's inpatient units has gone through a significant transition. Not only have 14 Level One beds been added to serve the most acute level of need throughout the state but the Retreat has seen the state's Medicaid population become the predominant group on each of its inpatient units. At any given time 50% of the Retreat's inpatient revenues come from the state Medicaid system. In addition, the Retreat has seen the number of individuals served who are on involuntary status grow from an average of 5-6 to an average of 25-30 reaching a high of 40 individuals on involuntary status less than one month ago.

We are proud to provide an essential service to Vermonters and committed to being a strong partner in Vermont's changing healthcare landscape but with the shifting mix of our clients and payment source away from commercial payers we have seen annual budget short falls that challenge our ability to remain a strong resource for our neighbors statewide. Budget shortfalls have also placed a considerable strain on our ability to invest in our workforce that allows us to keep existing beds open.

Lastly, without a strong rate increase the additional 12 Level One beds, identified as a crucial part of the Vermont mental health system during this past legislative session would be placed in jeopardy.

In conclusion the Retreat wants to be clear that it very much appreciates the work and efforts that have gone in to the current proposed rate but asks that these additionally comments be factored in before any final determination is made.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely

Louis Josephson, CSW, Ph.D.
President and Chief Executive Officer
Brattleboro Retreat