

February 10, 2016

Senator Kathy Campbell
District #25 State Capitol
PO Box 94604
Lincoln, NE 68509-4604

RE: LB 696

Dear Senator Campbell and Members of the Health and Human Services Committee:

LB 696 calls for the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to submit a state plan amendment or a Section 1115 waiver for a demonstration project regarding coverage of opioid abuse. I have already spoken to Senator Howard about LB 696, and while the Department takes no position on this bill we would like the committee to be aware of the following initiatives and policies within DHHS related to this issue.

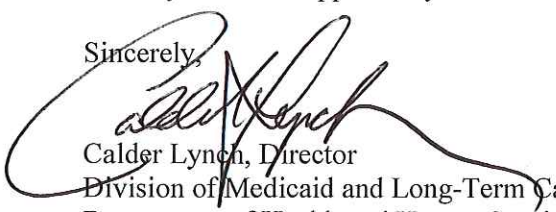
There are three components for the treatment of opioid use disorder. The first component is medication assisted treatment (MAT) which includes administration of methadone, buprenorphine or naloxone, and oral or injectable naltrexone (i.e. vivitrol). The second component for the treatment of opioid abuse is substance use disorder counseling. The third component is peer support services.

Currently, Nebraska Medicaid provides coverage of Methadone for the treatment of pain and not for the treatment of opioid addiction. Medicaid provides coverage for injectable naltrexone and buprenorphine in conjunction with substance use disorder counseling. These are available to Nebraska Medicaid clients through behavioral health managed care. A state plan amendment would be required to provide for the full coverage of MAT and peer support services. MLTC is planning on submitting a state plan amendment to cover peer support services in the near future. Because certain components of treatment of opioid abuse are currently covered under Medicaid and the additional components could be covered under the state plan, a demonstration project would not be necessary.

Another effort within DHHS that support the prevention and treatment of opioid abuse is the collaboration between the Division of Behavioral Health (as state opioid treatment authority) and the Division of Public Health in developing a plan to address barriers to enhancing and maximizing access to Nebraska's prescription drug overdose prevention program. These divisions are also engaged in a technical assistance effort with the Addiction Treatment Technology Center to implement a training plan for substance use disorder treatment providers aimed at increasing the knowledge base of and utilization of MAT.

Thank you for the opportunity to share these technical concerns.

Sincerely,



Calder Lynch, Director
Division of Medicaid and Long-Term Care
Department of Health and Human Services

CC: Sen. Sara Howard