

Recreational Therapy Program Amendments

2026 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Todd Weiler

House Sponsor: Karianne Lisonbee

LONG TITLE

General Description:

This bill amends provisions related to Medicaid reimbursement for recreational therapy.

Highlighted Provisions:

This bill:

- adds to the list of recreational therapy facilities or programs that may be reimbursed for recreational therapy under the Medicaid program a licensed residential support program that is accredited by the American Camp Association;
- authorizes the Department of Health and Human Services to apply for any necessary waivers to implement the change; and
- makes technical and conforming changes.

Money Appropriated in this Bill:

None

Other Special Clauses:

None

Utah Code Sections Affected:

AMENDS:

26B-3-227, as enacted by Laws of Utah 2023, Chapter 288

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the state of Utah:

Section 1. Section **26B-3-227** is amended to read:

26B-3-227 . Recreational therapy -- Reimbursement.

(1) As used in this section:

- (a) "Assisted living facility" means the same as that term is defined in Section 26B-2-201.
- (b) "Behavioral health program" means a behavioral health program described in [Title 62A, Chapter 15, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Act] Title 26B, Chapter 5,

Health Care - Substance Use and Mental Health.

(c) "General acute hospital" means the same as that term is defined in Section 26B-2-201.

(d) "Intermediate care facility" means the same as that term is defined in Section 58-15-101.

(e) "Mental health therapist" means the same as that term is defined in Section 58-60-102.

(f) "Qualified enrollee" means an individual who:

(i) is enrolled in the Medicaid program; and

(ii) has been referred for recreational therapy services by a mental health therapist.

(g) "Recreational therapy services" means the same as that term is defined in Section 58-40-102.

(h) "Residential support program" means the same as that term is defined in Section 26B-2-101.

~~[(h)]~~ (i) "Skilled nursing facility" means the same as that term is defined in Section 58-15-101.

~~[(i)]~~ (j) "Youth residential treatment facility" means a facility that provides a 24-hour group living environment for four or more individuals who are under 18 years old and who are unrelated to the owner or provider of the facility.

(2) Before January 1, 2024, the department shall apply for a Medicaid waiver or a state plan with CMS to allow for reimbursement for recreational therapy services provided:

(a) to a qualified enrollee;

(b) by an individual authorized to engage in the practice of recreational therapy under Title 58, Chapter 40, Recreational Therapy Practice Act; and

(c) at a:

(i) general acute hospital;

(ii) youth residential treatment facility;

(iii) behavioral health program;

(iv) intermediate care facility;

(v) assisted living facility;

(vi) skilled nursing facility;

(vii) psychiatric hospital; ~~[or]~~

(viii) mental health agency~~[-]~~ ; or

~~(ix)~~ licensed residential support program that is accredited by the American Camp Association.

(3) If the waiver or state plan amendment described in Subsection (2) is approved, the

63 Medicaid program shall provide coverage to a qualified enrollee for recreational therapy
64 services.

65 (4) The department may seek approval from CMS for any waiver, amendment to an
66 existing waiver, or state plan amendment necessary to implement this section.

67 Section 2. **Effective Date.**

68 This bill takes effect on May 6, 2026.