

Public Act No. 23-41

An Act Concerning Access to Reproductive Health Care by Students at Public Institutions of Higher Education

Requirement

This Act requires the Board of Regents for Higher Education (BOR) and the UConn Board of Trustees (BOT), by January 1, 2024, to establish and update as needed a plan to provide reproductive health care services by a licensed health care provider to students who live on residential campuses (i.e., any public higher education institution campus with school-owned dorms or fraternities and sororities) under the boards' jurisdiction. The plan must address:

- the availability of equipment and licensed health care providers to provide reproductive health care services on the residential campus or in the surrounding community;*
- opportunities for providing reproductive health care or other associated services, including telehealth counseling services; means for ensuring continuity of care during holiday and vacation periods and between semesters; and*
- an estimate of the costs associated with plan implementation and the availability of public and private funding sources to cover the costs.*

The plan must also cover how the school will provide:

- 1. referrals for, and transportation services to, access reproductive health care services at any off-campus location;*
- 2. information and materials about pregnancy being a qualifying life event for health insurance coverage in the state; and*
- 3. educational materials on maternal mental health care and resources for maternal mental health screenings.*

Reproductive Health Services as defined by Section 52-571 includes all medical, surgical, counseling or referral services relating to the human reproductive system, including, but not limited to, services relating to pregnancy, contraception or the termination of a pregnancy and all medical care relating to treatment of gender dysphoria.

Not later than thirty days after establishing or updating a plan for each residential campus, the institutions shall submit such plan to the standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to higher education and employment advancement and post such plan on its Internet web site and the website of the public institution of higher education associated with each residential campus.

**Student Health and Wellness (SHaW) Plan
January 2024**

- 1) **Availability of SHaW Services:** SHaW offers a suite of services applicable to the act on both residential campuses.
 - a. The SHaW practice at the Storrs campus is staffed by trained and licensed doctors, advanced practice registered nurses (APRN) and registered nurses (RN) who provide counseling, evaluation, and treatment. Among the services provided on the Storrs campus are:
 - Primary care gynecological services including preventative gynecological services
 - Gender affirming care including hormone therapy
 - Sexually transmitted infection screening, testing and treatment including expedited partner therapy (EPT)
 - An on-site pharmacy and phlebotomy station
 - Contraceptive care including emergency contraception options
 - A Nurse Advice Line which is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week during the academic year, and during business hours on breaks
 - Free period products available at the Hilda May Williams Building and at other designated sites on campus
 - GloveBox, an online ordering and delivery service of safer sex supplies which are also available at designated sites on campus
 - Education about sexual health including the peer education program, UConn Sexperts
 - A peer support group for expecting and parenting students
 - b. The SHaW practice at the Stamford campus is currently undergoing an expansion of services. Beginning in the spring 2024 semester, a registered nurse will be present on the Stamford campus to serve as a Nurse Navigator. The Nurse Navigator will support students by facilitating the coordination of care with providers in the community appropriate to the student's needs. Currently available to Stamford campus students is the Nurse Advice Line which is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week during the academic year, and during business hours on breaks. Also provided on the Stamford campus are:
 - Free period products
 - Safer sex supplies which are also available at designated sites on campus
 - Education about sexual health
 - A peer support group for expecting and parenting students
- 2) **Access to Off-Campus Services:** When a student at the Storrs or Stamford campus seeks a service not available at the on-campus facility, SHaW will work with the student to assess the student's clinical needs, preferences, and insurance coverage and support them in matching these with appropriate local providers.

- a. The Storrs campus facility offers most primary care services. The above pathway applies for certain students needing services not provided by SHaW. In addition, SHaW is collaborating with providers at UConn Health to assess the need and increase the availability of reproductive healthcare services in Storrs.
 - b. The Stamford campus primarily offers the Nurse Navigator services as detailed above as a pathway for students needing access to services not provided by SHaW.
- 3) **Continuity of Care:** SHaW will continue to account for continuity of care during holiday and vacation periods, and between semesters, in the care plans they develop with students on the Storrs and Stamford campuses. The Nurse Advice Line is available to all students 24/7 during the academic year, and during business hours when classes are not in session. The Storrs practice provides services to students year-round, and there is on-call coverage outside of business hours during the academic year. SHaW currently provides limited telehealth services in compliance with prevailing regulations and standards of care.
- 4) **Transportation:** For purposes of advancing this plan, SHaW has defined the service region to be within a 50-mile radius of the residential campuses in Storrs and Stamford. This includes a network of licensed providers in the metropolitan areas of Springfield and Hartford for the Storrs campus, and New Haven and New York for the Stamford campus. SHaW will encourage students requiring transportation within this region to use SHaW taxi vouchers or a rideshare service. SHaW will provide related financial support to cover transportation fees to qualifying appointments. SHaW estimates the annual transportation costs will be \$10,000. SHaW will investigate whether transportation costs may be covered by an individual student's insurance, however this is otherwise unfunded.
- 5) **Qualifying Life Event for Insurance Coverage:** While all UConn students are required to have health insurance, SHaW recognizes that certain plans may not cover reproductive health services. The diagnosis of pregnancy is a qualifying life event for insurance coverage purposes, which allows for students to change to a different insurance plan outside of the open enrollment period. SHaW will provide students with information and materials about pregnancy being a qualifying life event for a change of health insurance coverage in the state. The information provided by SHaW may include, for example, that regardless of a student's permanent address, a student may apply for HUSKY Health coverage based upon a school residential address. Additionally, SHaW has been informed that HUSKY Health recognizes gender affirming care as a qualifying life event and will share that information with students as appropriate. SHaW may also provide information about the UConn Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP) and other potential insurance options. SHaW recognizes that some students may not meet the HUSKY Health eligibility criteria and has not identified a funding source for other insurance options or for the cost of reproductive services not covered by existing insurance.

- 6) **Maternal Mental Health Care:** SHaW has a mental health clinical case management team on both the Storrs and Stamford campuses that specifically focuses on identifying specialized mental health needs including, potentially, maternal mental health needs and connecting students to community-based resources. Students may also be referred to the SHaW website to access a range of mental health self-assessments and educational materials on maternal mental health. The SHaW team is in the process of examining a range of additional maternal mental health tools to determine those best suited to the demographics of student populations. Such assessments may be added to the existing suite of tools.