

Rosenberg Corey

From: Dena Shehab <dena@denashehab.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 07, 2017 1:09 PM
To: SHS Exhibits
Subject: Support SB860

Oregon State Legislators,

I would like to express my support for Senate Bill 860 which aims to appropriately bolster the provision and payment of mental health services in our State. As a psychologist in Portland, I've experienced the challenges of insurance companies as rates, especially for CPT 90837 (individual psychotherapy, 60 minutes), have been reduced. Further, aggressive utilization review and micro-managing limits mental health professionals from effectively treating their clients. While mental health parity has been the law, it seems there are gaps in how it is being upheld by payors/insurance companies.

Because of some of these challenges, many providers have turned to ending their contracts and operating independently from insurers, accepting only out-of-pocket payment. I, not infrequently, get calls from prospective clients seeking help after being told that the contracted providers whose names they were given don't have any availability.

I, thus far, have remained committed to contracting with several major insurance companies because I know that many folks in Portland need to use their health insurance to pay for psychological care. In order to keep other aspects of their life afloat, they simply would be forced to go without their mental health issues being treated. And if contracted providers decrease in numbers because of the hassles of working with insurers or insufficient compensation for providers by insurers, then I fear many more people will not receive the help they need. The consequences are significant, from poor work performance, increased use of sick days, overuse of medical benefits, family dysfunction, and more.

Please act now to robustly support mental health care in this state, by voting YES on Senate Bill 680.

Best Regards,

Dena Shehab, Psy.D.
Portland, Oregon