

SB 860 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Carrier: Sen. Gelser

Senate Committee On Human Services

Action Date: 04/12/17

Action: Do pass with amendments. (Printed A-Eng.)

Vote: 5-0-0-0

Yeas: 5 - Dembrow, Gelser, Knopp, Monnes Anderson, Olsen

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: No revenue impact

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WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Requires Department of Consumer and Business Services (DCBS) to examine parity of insurance reimbursements between "behavioral mental health providers" and those of "medical providers" and mental health providers with prescribing privileges. Requires DCBS to adopt rules ensuring implementation of mental health parity and network adequacy requirements based on findings. Directs DCBS to report findings and adopted rules to Legislative Assembly by September 1, 2019. Sunsets January 2, 2021. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Impact of reimbursement practices on mental health professionals and availability of mental health services
- Methods of measuring parity between mental and physical health providers
- Role of insurance in access to mental health services

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

Makes clarifying changes. Changes DCBS reporting date to September 1, 2019. Changes sunset to January 2, 2021.

BACKGROUND:

Federal and state law require group health insurance policies to cover expenses for treating chemical dependency (such as alcoholism) and mental health conditions (together referred to as behavioral health care) at the same level as other medical care, and entitles behavioral health care providers to reimbursement. Current law also prohibits insurers from discriminating against health care providers that are providing care within the scope of their license under a health benefit plan; however, many states implementing Medicaid expansion are experiencing difficulty achieving parity between different types of health care providers.

Senate Bill 860-A requires the Department of Consumer and Business Services (DCBS) to examine the parity of insurance reimbursements between "behavioral mental health providers," "medical providers," and mental health providers with prescribing privileges, including: historical trends for maximum reimbursements; parity between utilization management procedures reimbursements; parity for reimbursements for incremental increases to office visits; and parity of reimbursement calculation methodologies. The measure also requires DCBS to adopt rules fully implementing existing mental health parity and network adequacy statutes, including incorporating the examination's findings. Lastly, Senate Bill 860-A directs DCBS to report its findings and adopted rules to the Legislative Assembly by September 1, 2019.