



MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT S.3421 (Savino)/A.648 (Bronson)

AN ACT to amend the social services laws, in relation to allowing the care and services provided by licensed mental health practitioners to be billed directly to Medicaid

The NYS Council seeks to expand the availability of qualified practitioners who can help to ensure continued access to and continuity of care for children and adults requiring mental health and substance use disorder/addictions treatment services in New York. The NYS Department of Health has indicated that legislation is required to authorize licensed mental health practitioners to bill Medicaid for their services.

In the midst of a debilitating Opioid Epidemic and increased suicide rates, we must make every attempt to address current workforce shortages to ensure qualified professionals are available to provide services whenever / wherever an individual steps forward seeking care. According to the NYS Education Department's licensing statistics from January 9, 2019, over 1,000 Licensed Mental Health Counselors (LMHC) and Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists (LMFT) were added to the ranks of clinicians licensed to provide Medicaid services in New York.

Given the significant challenges faced by providers attempting to keep pace with current demand for care we must explore every available option. LMHCs and LMFTs are highly qualified and willing to provide Medicaid services inside our programs and in private practice and should be permitted to do so in both settings without administrative barriers. We urge NYS lawmakers to pass this bill swiftly to accommodate the needs of vulnerable New Yorkers seeking our care.

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