



**MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT
A.10707 Bronson/ S.3981A Savino**

***Makes care and services provided by licensed mental health practitioners
eligible for coverage under the Medicaid program***

The NYS Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare represents 100 behavioral health (mental health and substance use) prevention, treatment and recovery organizations across New York. Our members include free standing community-based agencies, general hospitals, and counties that operate direct services.

The members of the NYS Council **strongly support this legislation, A.10707 Bronson/S.3981A Savino.** This bill will enable mental health practitioners licensed pursuant to Article 163 of the Education Law to be authorized Medicaid providers.

The bill is necessary to improve access to behavioral health services at a time when the demand for behavioral health services is higher than ever and at a time when the workforce shortages are the most severe. This bill will not expand Medicaid eligibility, but rather would allow Medicaid eligible individuals to access care and treatment to which they are entitled and have already been determined to be medically necessary.

Individuals in need of mental health care should be able to receive treatment from appropriately licensed providers, and providers should be able to bill Medicaid directly for their covered services. This will allow these Master's educated professionals to serve families impacted by the opioid epidemic, problem gambling, gun violence anxiety, and specifically those populations facing gaps in treatment. One recent national study found that among people with depression, 69% of Asian Americans, 64% of Latinos and 59% of African Americans did not access treatment, compared to 40% of Whites.

In 2011, the New York State Office of Mental Health produced a report, authorized by the Legislature, entitled, "Unmet Needs Assessment Report – Statewide Assessment of Treatment Gaps for Racial/Ethnic Groups in Need of Mental Health Services." The report found that the shortage of mental health providers is a factor for many underserved populations such as those with limited English Language Proficiency, those with unmet housing needs, those with criminal justice contact, those living in rural communities, and members of the LGBTQ community. A bill that will increase the ability of licensed mental health practitioners to serve Medicaid eligible individuals and families will help address treatment gaps

For these reasons, the NYS Council supports A.10707 Bronson/S.3981A Savino and urges that it be enacted this session.

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