

April 1, 2025

Dear Chairwoman Donovan and Members of the House Health & Human Services Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 5863, which seeks to address reimbursement rates for behavioral health services. As a mental health provider, I believe this legislation is essential for enhancing the quality of care and ensuring that individuals in our community have access to the necessary support and services.

By requiring commercial insurers to implement a one-time increase in in-network outpatient behavioral healthcare reimbursement rates, this bill will encourage providers to accept insurance and sustain their practices. As a result, it will help expand access to services, support early intervention efforts, and potentially lower long-term healthcare costs.

This issue is particularly important to me because of the community I serve. I have many clients who are in need of mental health and recovery support and have run into barriers for YEARS trying to find a provider who will accept their insurance. These individuals are in need of support and providers are unable to accommodate them due to the rising costs of sustaining a mental health practice. For us to meet the needs of those with the most economic stress, we as providers need to be able to maintain our practices and can only do so if we are reimbursed fairly. Without this legislation, I am concerned that individuals will suffer longer, will be unable to contribute to our communities economically and socially due to mental health concerns, and I believe we will continue to see a rise in suicide related deaths and overdose deaths.

I urge you to support House Bill 5863 and advocate for its passage. This bill represents a critical step toward improving healthcare access, promoting fair reimbursement practices, and elevating the quality of care for all. Thank you for your time and consideration of this important issue. I trust you will act in the best interest of our community and those who depend on quality health and human services.

Sincerely,

Tori Lynn Panzarella, LMHC, LCDP