

AAA Committee Recommendation Report

Report to the AAA Board

Report prepared by: Angela Velasquez 261-9700
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Date: 7 October 2019

From: Access Committee Legislative/Advocacy Committee Nutrition/Wellness Committee

History/Related Actions

At the 9/25/19 Legislative/Advocacy Committee meeting, the Mental Health Access Improvement Act (S. 286/H.R. 945) was discussed:

AAA Manager Cheryl Batterman has participated in two national conference calls as part of the Medicare Mental Health Workforce regarding the Mental Health Access Improvement Act of 2019 (Senate Bill 286 and HR Bill 945), which seeks to expand coverage of mental health services under Part B of Medicare. Specifically, the bill would amend the Social Security Act to increase access to mental health services by permitting Licensed Professional Counselors and Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists to be reimbursed by Medicare. The Medicare Mental Health Workforce is seeking local stakeholders to write letters of support for the legislation.

A motion was made by BUNCK, seconded by MCHONE, to recommend the AAA Board send a letter supporting the passage of Senate Bill 286 and HR Bill 945 to the state's congressional delegation. The motion carried by the following vote:

*Ayes 5 – BUNCK, CASTANEDA, LEZOTTE, MCHONE, OLSON
Absent 3 – KAUD, KRETSCHMAN, SCHMIDLKOFER*

Financial/Budget/Other Resource Implications (if any)

None to Dane County

Recommendations

To approve the attached draft letter concerning the Mental Health Access Improvement Act (S. 286/H.R. 945).

Attachments

None

It is understood that dollars are limited; but it is unwise to spend the majority of Medicare's mental health funding on expensive inpatient care while providing insufficient lower-cost services in the community. One way to effectively increase outpatient mental health services is to expand the classification of eligible providers to include MFTs and MHCs.

We strongly urge your support for the passage of S. 286/H.R. 945

cc: The Honorable Tony Evers, Governor, State of Wisconsin
State Elected Officials (representing Dane County)
Members, Dane County Board of Supervisors
The Honorable Joe Parisi, Dane County Executive
Ms. Shawn Tessmann, Director, Dane County Department of Human Services