

07/01/2022

Hello REDC Members,

Here is this week's policy update.

REDC Congressional Briefing

- *"Supporting Mental Health Care Virtually: How Telehealth and Parity Compliance Narrow Gaps in Access to Care"*
- **When:** Wednesday, July 13th from 12-1pm EDT
- **Where:** Zoom Webinar
- **RSVP:** [Register Here](#)
- **Purpose:**
 - The Congressional briefing will explore how telehealth and federal parity protections continue to close gaps in access to mental health services.
 - Expert speakers will discuss how telehealth is utilized in a variety of settings across the country and how Congress can continue to advance access to these critical services.
- **Speakers:**
 - Jillian Lampert, PhD, RD, MPH, Board President, REDC; Moderator
 - Kelly Vaillancourt-Strobach, PhD, Director of Policy & Advocacy, National Association of School Psychologists
 - Juhie Parnami, MPH, Chief Telehealth Officer, Eating Recovery Center
 - David Lloyd, MBA, Senior Policy Advisor, Kennedy Forum
 - Faith Carlson, MA, LPC-MH, IAEDP Member, CEDS Candidate, Eating Disorders Coalition Ambassador.

Telehealth

Rep. Manning Introduces Telemental Health Parity Act ([H.R. 8229](#))

- Reps. Manning (D-NC), Fitzpatrick (R-PA), and Matsui (D-CA) introduced the Telemental Health Parity Act, which would codify DOL's 2022 Parity Report findings that MH/SUD services delivered via telehealth must be provided coverage to the same extent as MH/SUD services delivered in-person.
 - Essentially, the bill clarifies existing law that parity law applies to services delivered via telehealth.
- **This is one of the initiatives REDC members pushed for during advocacy day late last month.**
- The press release can be found [here](#).

REDC Joins Letter to House/Senate Leadership to Improve Medicare Coverage of MH/SUD

- The letter was led by the Legal Action Center and signed by 245 signatories.
- The letter is addressed to Senate Finance Committee and House Ways & Means Committee leaders urging them to remove barriers to MH/SUD care and address treatment coverage and access for Medicare beneficiaries.
 - This includes having Medicare adhere to federal parity law.
- The full letter is attached.

Rural Telehealth Access Task Force Act Introduced

- Reps. Pence (R-IN) and Craig (D-MN) introduced the Rural Telehealth Access Task Force Act ([H.R. 8169](#)), which would establish a Rural Telehealth Access Task Force to determine how to address barriers to adoption of telehealth technology and access to broadband internet access service in rural areas.

Telehealth Advocates Focus on Long-Term Policy Changes to Address Cross-State Care

- According to the Alliance for Connected Care, 15 states still had licensure flexibilities in place as of mid-April, down from 24 in early March.
 - As of mid-June, this number fell to just 13 states.
- While the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact (IMLC) provides one avenue for addressing cross-state care, it is time-consuming and expensive to utilize and has the participation of 38 states.
 - According to Amwell, they see an average licensing cost of \$1,000 per state per physician, which comes out to roughly \$50,000 per provider for a nationwide practice.
- Other advocates are supportive for reciprocal licensure arrangements between states.
- Stakeholders are also split on the role that the federal government should take.

White House Issues Report on Improving Telehealth Services for SUD

- The White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) released the [“Telehealth and Substance Use Disorder Services in the Era of COVID-19: Review and Recommendations”](#) report.
- The report found telehealth services can provide increased access to vulnerable individuals with SUD, decrease costs, and reduce the spread of communicable diseases.
- The report makes several recommendations, including to expand and make consistent current state and federal telehealth policies, and for federal support of mutual recognition and reciprocity of state licenses.

Have a great holiday weekend!
Center Road Solutions Team