

HCS HB 889 -- MENTAL HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE

SPONSOR: Lewis (25)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Health and Mental Health Policy by a vote of 15 to 0.

This bill requires that each health carrier that issues health benefit plans on or after January 1, 2022, and that provide coverage for a mental health condition shall meet the requirements of the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008.

These provisions do not apply to specified supplemental policies.

This bill is similar to SB 80 (2021) and similar to HB 1528 and HB 2384 (2020).

The following is a summary of the public testimony from the committee hearing. The testimony was based on the introduced version of the bill.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that mental health care is just as important as physical health care. Mental health should not be discriminated against. This bill puts mental and physical health care on a level playing field. This opens up treatment options to people who may not have sought treatment before due to it not being covered by their insurance. The sooner a mental disorder is addressed, the better the outcome will be for that patient.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Lewis; Cory Hogan, Missouri State Council of Fire Fighters; Dr. Paul T. Korte, Missouri Psychological Association; Kevin D. Baird; Linda Fehrmann, American Foundation for Suicide Prevention; Susan Gibson; Suzanne King, Mental Health America of Eastern Mo; Aaron Crossley, LMSW, Truman Medical Centers Behavioral Health; Missouri Psychiatric Physicians Association; Gena Terlizzi, National Alliance on Mental Illness; Missouri Coalition for Community Behavioral Healthcare; Arnie C. Dienoff; Bruce Fletcher, Prairie Mental Health; Missouri State Medical Association; Missouri Nurses Association; Washington University, Health Forward Foundation; BJC Healthcare; St. Louis Children's Hospital; National Association of Social Workers-Missouri Chapter; Burrell Behavioral Health; Mental Health America Of Eastern Missouri; and Wayne Lee.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say the Missouri Department of Mental Health primarily serves individuals in state hospitals who are referred by courts. The bill supports insurance coverage

health services for the general public needing treatment.

Testifying on the bill were Susan Flanigan, Missouri Department Of Mental Health; and America's Health Insurance Plans;

Written testimony has been submitted for this bill. The full written testimony can be found under Testimony on the bill page on the House website.