



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 1123		DATE: 3/20/2023
COMMITTEE: Health and Mental Health Policy		
TESTIFYING: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: HAILEY SWICK		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL: hbswick@gmail.com	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 3/20/2023 12:03 AM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		

My name is Hailey Swick. I am a senior at the University of Missouri, and I wanted to bring a message regarding the current accessibility of Dialectical Behavioral Therapy. There are several barriers to receiving DBT, one of which being how private insurance companies only cover a portion of DBT, forcing individuals to pay out of pocket for the rest. However, not everyone has the ability to pay for the uncovered modes of therapy. As a college student with a mental health condition, I have experienced issues with receiving treatment. My sophomore year of college, I finally decided to open up about my struggles, and I sought out therapy, but soon I realized the reality of my situation. My insurance would not cover my therapy appointments, so even though I wanted to get better, I was unable to pay for it. Students, like myself, do not have the extra money to pay for therapy if our insurance does not cover it, which is why I am supporting HB1123. People with mental health conditions are already fighting their own battles, so they do not need to have the extra stress of worrying about paying for help. Thank you, and I hope you vote in favor of HB1123.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: JEFF BRENNEMAN		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: jbrenneman@lifeworkstl.com		ATTENDANCE: In-Person	SUBMIT DATE: 3/16/2023 7:31 AM

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Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) is a highly effective form of therapy that reduces suicide and self harm behaviors, greatly reduces hospital days, and creates a life worth living . The therapy needs government support in order for the therapy to be delivered to the people that are in need. Unlike many other types of mental health therapy, DBT requires several elements that are not readily available in general mental health practice and which present difficulties for many to access this care. To be effective, the treatment consists of individual sessions, group skills training, phone coaching between sessions, and a consultation team in order for practitioners to deliver effective treatment. I am a provider in Missouri and own a practice called LifeWork, LLC. We have roughly 12 therapists providing this type of therapy and have a commitment to serving Missouri citizens whom access insurance to provide healthcare services. Over the past 13 years in practice, it has become increasingly difficult to continue to provide this therapy due to a lack of all pieces being supported for reimbursement. Many practices have gone to only private pay for these services due to the intense nature of the provision of these services and the lack of reimbursement commensurate with the skills and number of interventions required. DBT is an evidence based intervention for suicidal individuals, those with many risky/reckless behaviors, substance use disorders and other diagnoses/problems. The complexity of the treatment has not been recognized by insurance companies or through the expansion of Medicaid in the State of Missouri. There are several factors that inhibit my ability to continue delivering services within my practice and for those whom work for me. 1. There is no funding to offset the cost of consultation team and phone coaching, both essential for the treatment to work. 2. Labor shortages and the introduction of national companies like Better Help (owned by Teledoc) and Teledoc have made it easier for individuals to go into practice 'on their own' virtually without the support of a larger practice, making hiring and training even more difficult. 3. Without enhanced reimbursement, there is little incentive for prospective mental health practitioners to become proficient in DBT. 4. Current economic factors have made it more difficult for clients to afford these life saving services. In Missouri, we do not have enough access to DBT to come anywhere close to the demand for services. It is also my belief that a task force focused on implementation could be a very good way to move forward provided there is enough input from those whom have been doing the work of trying to disseminate DBT over the years in Missouri. I would also greatly appreciate the opportunity to testify in front of the committee as this issue is of extreme importance to me. I would welcome further dialogue concerning this issue if desired by any of your members.



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WITNESS NAME			
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:			
WITNESS NAME: KELLI UNNERSTALL		PHONE NUMBER: 314-422-7009	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: ASPIRE ADVOCATES FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH		TITLE: FOUNDER, PARENT	
ADDRESS: 14649 SUMMER BLOSSOM LN			
CITY: CHESTERFIELD		STATE: MO	ZIP: 63017
EMAIL: unnerstall@me.com	ATTENDANCE: In-Person	SUBMIT DATE: 3/14/2023 2:23 PM	

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My name is Kelli Unnerstall. I am the founder of Aspire Advocates for Behavioral Health, a nonprofit whose mission is to improve the identification, treatment, and reimbursement of behavioral health services for young people. DBT is a lifesaving and quality-of-life enhancing therapy. Unfortunately, this type of therapy is not accessible to most Missourians because of incomplete insurance coverage. Many insurers say they cover DBT, but they really only cover certain components. As a result, DBT is often a cash pay service in Missouri. Another consequence of incomplete insurance coverage is that patients are sometimes being told they are being offered DBT, but not all components are being implemented. This is not DBT. This piecemeal approach does not produce the results that research on DBT promises. It is misleading and dangerous to people that need to achieve the positive outcomes offered by adherent DBT. Incomplete coverage has also led to a shortage of providers. HB1123 addresses these issues. The most important perspective I can offer you is my experience as a patient. I live with a mental health condition, namely bipolar disorder, and I have also been in recovery from substance use disorder for the past 37 years. As a result of having bipolar disorder, my emotions are at times quite intense and dysregulated. I have also had significant struggles with anxiety and irritability. My challenges persisted, despite decades of medical intervention, until I was introduced to DBT. DBT helped me better regulate my intense emotions by strengthening my distress tolerance and emotion regulation skills. I have tools in my toolbox that were not there before I went through DBT. My relationships and my ability to contribute to society have been enhanced as a result of my DBT work. DBT has given me what I think more Missourians need: Hope. Hope that we can better live with the challenging emotions that are part of our mental health condition. Hope that we will always have the skills to face new challenges. And hope that we can continue to lead a life worth living. As members of the Health and Mental Health Committee, I know you are all aware that Missouri is in a crisis today. The number 1 and number 2 leading causes of death of young adults in our state are overdose and suicide. Every legislator in this building is deeply concerned about this crisis- especially the crisis our young people are facing. What we are currently doing is not enough to stem this crisis. We need different solutions if we want different results. HB1123 gives MO legislators the opportunity to actually do something different to address this crisis. Please vote in favor of HB1123.



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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: KIMBERLY VAY		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL: kimv@dbt-lbc.org	ATTENDANCE: In-Person	SUBMIT DATE: 3/14/2023 3:51 PM
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I will be testifying in favor of HB 1123



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: SHERRY THOMAS		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: Sherryasteel@gmail.com	ATTENDANCE: In-Person		SUBMIT DATE: 3/20/2023 8:10 AM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

My name is Sherry Thomas. I am speaking to you today as a mother. My daughter, Amber suffered with mental illness for more than a decade. It was difficult to find adequate and effective treatment, much less to be able to afford that kind of care. After struggling for so many years with devastating illness without much relief, my daughter lost her battle and took her life. Imagine if this was your child. There probably isn't anyone in this room that hasn't been impacted in one way or another by mental illness and it's effects on us personally, on our families, and on our society. You want to do something to help, to alleviate the suffering but the problem seems overwhelming. Where do you even start? You have heard testimony today about DBT therapy and how it has been proven to be effective in treating illnesses, relieving some of this suffering, and has allowed many to be able to improve the quality of their lives. Please consider the costs to our families and to the state of Missouri of not providing an effective course of treatment and the means to be able to access that. It is in your power to help our more vulnerable Missourians. I'm asking for your support on HB 1123. Thank you for your time.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: SUZANNE WITTERHOLT, M.D.		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: suzanne.witterholt@allina.com	ATTENDANCE: In-Person		SUBMIT DATE: 3/15/2023 4:30 PM

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.
Presenting as an expert in Dialectical Behavior Therapy



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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: ARNIE C. "HONEST-ABE" DIENOFF-STATE PUBLIC ADVOCATE		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL: arniedienoff@yahoo.com	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 3/20/2023 11:43 PM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		

I am Opposed to this Bill. We do NOT NEED yet more State Regulations for a Missourians to Speak with a Counselor over the Telephone or over the Internet. We as State do not NNED yet another Task Force and Report that will collect dusk. These Regulations shall be guided by the Medical Community.



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WITNESS NAME			
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:			
WITNESS NAME: SHANNON COOPER		PHONE NUMBER: 660-890-1432	
REPRESENTING: AMERICA'S HEALTH INSURANCE PLANS		TITLE:	
ADDRESS: 208 MADISON			
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65101
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 3/20/2023 12:00 AM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			