

RESOLUTION 053702

Supporting passage of S.B. 116 and H.B. 180, the proposed Mental Health Insurance Parity Bills, and urging the Ohio General Assembly to act favorably on this legislation.

WHEREAS, mental illness is a disease of the brain; and treatment for biological brain disorders can be as effective as treatment for heart disease, cancer and other serious physical health disorders.

WHEREAS, according to the New Freedom Commission report, mental illness is the second leading cause of disability and premature death in the United States. The indirect cost of mental illness to Ohio, due to lost productivity at work or school (for the patient or caregiver) or incarceration of the mentally ill, is estimated to be in excess of \$3.5 billion annually.

WHEREAS, too many families are unable to access quality, appropriate services for their children experiencing mental illness; and parents and caregivers of children in the child welfare system often have mental health issues that put their children's health and safety at risk; and untreated maternal depression is a growing factor in referrals to the child welfare system.

WHEREAS, for many children and families, their safety and ongoing stability in a permanent family – birth, relative or adoptive family – depends upon access to mental health services; and home and community-based mental health treatment options can help prevent expensive residential placements for children.

WHEREAS, mental health parity would reduce costs to local alcohol, drug addiction and community mental health boards which serve as the safety net for individuals who are uninsured or underinsured; and individuals with untreated mental illness are far more likely to wind up in Ohio's jails and prisons.

WHEREAS, 36 states have already enacted mental health insurance parity laws; and Ohio remains in the minority of states that have not addressed this disparity.

AND WHEREAS, in Cuyahoga County, where it is estimated that at least 215,000 residents are affected by mental illness, we witness the social costs of untreated mental illness every day: increased hospitalizations and incarcerations, unemployment and the resulting reliance on Medicaid, the pain that individuals and families endure when a loved one is unable to access care because of discriminatory insurance practices.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that , the Board of County Commissioners of Cuyahoga County, Ohio, supports passage of S.B. 116 and H.B. 180, the mental health parity bills introduced in the 126 th General Assembly by Senator Robert F. Spada and Representative Jon M. Peterson respectively, as a significant step toward eliminating discrimination against individuals with behavioral health disorders; and strongly urges the Ohio General Assembly to act favorably upon this legislation and the Governor to sign it into law.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the Board be, and she is, hereby instructed to transmit a copy of this resolution to Senator Robert F. Spada, Senator, State of Ohio; Jon M. Peterson, Representative, Ohio House of Representatives; Robert Taft, Governor, State of Ohio; Mike Hogan, Director, Ohio Department of Mental Health; Joan Englund, Executive Director, Mental Health Advocacy Coalition; Bill Harris, President, Ohio Senate; C.J. Prentiss, Minority Leader, Ohio Senate; Jon Husted, Speaker, Ohio House of Representatives; Chris Redfern, Minority Leader, Ohio House of Representatives and Jim Corrigan, Government Relations Officer, Administrator's Office.

On Motion of Commissioner Dimora, seconded by Commissioner Jones, the foregoing resolution was duly adopted.

Ayes: Dimora, Jones, Hagan.

Nays: None.

Resolution Adopted.

Penelope M. Hughes,

Clerk of the Board

Journal 288
September 22, 2005
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