

March 15, 2020

Dear Senate Finance Committee member:

This letter is in support of SB 134 which allows Licensed Professional Counselor's to bill Medicaid without needing to work in a "Doctor's clinic", i.e. a clinic with an MD on staff. I am a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) currently practicing as part of a group, Counseling Solutions of Alaska. Our group is composed of individuals licensed as LPC's, LCSW's, and LMFT's providing psychotherapy to individuals ages ~ 5 and above as well as couples and families. Medication management is provided by highly qualified and experienced Advanced Psychiatric Nurse Practitioners. Medicaid will reimburse for the services of the ANP's. However, since we do not have an MD on staff, we are not able to bill Medicaid for clients who would like to be seen in psychotherapy. This requirement is a significant disservice to our clients and makes it much more difficult for them to receive services.

I am regularly contacted by individuals who have Medicaid and would like to receive psychotherapy in addition to medication management. Research has demonstrated that the combination of medication and psychotherapy is most effective in treating mental health conditions. It is very beneficial for the client to receive both services in the same office, for the sake of convenience as well as decreased stress. I am also called by individuals seeking only therapy services and am required to refer them elsewhere.

The requirement to have an MD on staff in order for LPC's to bill Medicaid restricts access to client's seeking psychotherapy, infers that the presence of Advanced Nurse Practitioners in a counseling office is somehow not as valuable as an MD, and increases barriers to those most in need. I strongly support approval of SB 134 by the Senate Finance Committee. Please contact me with questions at 907-644-8044 ext. 113 of sbomalaski@hotmail.com.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Susan H. Bomalaski".

Susan H. Bomalaski, Ph.D., LPC
Therapist
Counseling Solutions of Alaska