



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

Department of Commerce, Community,
and Economic Development

DIVISION OF INSURANCE
Licensing Section

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April 29, 2025

The Honorable Forrest Dunbar
Chair, Senate Health & Social Services Committee
Alaska State Capitol, Room 125
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Chair Dunbar:

As a follow up to the During the April 24, 2025, Senate Health and Social Services Committee hearing on SB 45 – Medicaid Mental Health Parity, there was a member question you requested the Division of Insurance to provide a written response. Our response follows:

Senator Hughes asked whether mental health coverage was a problem under other insurance plans and whether there is mental health parity in the private insurance market?

All health insurance plans must comply with federal mental health parity laws. Mental health parity means that if a health plan offers medical/surgical benefits and mental health benefits, the mental health benefits must be at parity with the medical/surgical benefits. Parity includes similar financial requirements, like copays and deductibles, yearly visit limits, prior authorization requirements and medical necessity. Additionally, individual and small group market health plans are required by federal law to include both medical/surgical and mental health benefits. Large group health plans are not mandated to have mental health benefits (most do), but if they do, mental health benefits must be offered at parity with medical/surgical benefits.

The individual and small group insurers are required to submit an annual certification with the division that they are compliant with mental health parity laws and regulations. As part of market conduct oversight, the division examines insurers offering health insurance in Alaska for compliance with mental health parity for all markets (individual, small group, large group). In addition, insurers must perform comparative analyses and submit them to the division upon request. The division also responds to consumer and provider complaints related to parity to ensure compliance. If an insurer is found deficient in any of these areas, the division has authority to fine and enforce corrective action on the insurer.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lori Wing-Heier".

Lori Wing-Heier
Director

cc: Lizzie Kubitz, Legislative Liaison
Jordan Shilling, Director, Governor's Legislative Office