

House Public & Behavioral Health & Human Services

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HB22-1268 Medicaid Mental Health Reimbursement Rates Report

Typed Text of Testimony Submitted

Name, Position, Representing	Typed Text of Testimony
Julie Reiskin For Colorado Cross-Disability Coal	Madam Chair and Members of the Committee Please accept our strong support for for HB 1268 to help the state address the problems going on with mental health centers. These centers have high turnover and a high rate of rejecting clients who are deemed difficult. For as long as we have had capitated Medicaid managed care Medicaid has paid a fee for every man, woman and child on Medicaid. This has translated into significant payments for mental health centers. During times of expansion this has NOT translated into increased access or timeliness. We need to get a handle of what we are paying and not just continue to give more and more money when there are poor outcomes and significant quality of care issues. This bill is not a panacea and not meant to be but it is an important step to get a handle on what is happening with millions of public dollars.



## **POLICY STATEMENT**

**Many LGBTQ+ Coloradans, especially transgender and non-binary individuals, rely on medicaid to receive essential health services. LGBTQ+ individuals experience significant mental health and substance use disparities, and cite the cost of services as a major barrier to care. Creating standards for reporting reimbursement rates paid to mental health and substance use providers will increase the affordability of services and ensure equitable reimbursement rates across providers. Envision:You supports House Bill 22-1268 to create a reporting and review system for medicaid reimbursement rates paid to mental health providers.**

### HB 22-1268 Concerning A Reporting of Medicaid Reimbursement Rates Paid To Mental Health Providers

The proposed bill would require the Department of Health Care Policy and Financing to prepare a report of medicaid reimbursement rates for community mental health, independent mental health and substance use treatment providers. The department must hire an independent auditor to prepare the report and provide recommendations on the report, recommendations will be presented to the house of representatives public health, behavioral health, and human services committees. The audit conducted must reflect data from the state fiscal year 2020-21 and include recommendations on the adequacy of reimbursement rates paid to medicaid mental health providers. The department must also prepare an annual report and provide an update at the State Measurement for Accountable, Responsive and Transparent (SMART) Government annual hearing through August 1, 2025.

### Why it Matters

Envision: You and OMNI Institute's 2021 State of the State Survey found that 15% of LGBTQ+ Coloradans were covered by medicaid. For many transgender and non-binary people, medicaid is the only insurance that is obtainable due to experiencing poverty and discrimination from employers and private insurers. Consistently reviewing reimbursement rates for different types of mental health providers will increase the affordability of services and ensure equitable reimbursement rates. This will also improve access to mental health resources for LGBTQ+ people, as cost of care is often a barrier to seeking out mental health services. In the State of the State survey, 63% of respondents who had difficulty accessing mental health services indicated that care was too expensive for them.

It is essential that LGBTQ+ Coloradans have access to affordable and gender-affirming mental health care. The LGBTQ+ community experiences significant health disparities with regards to mental health and substance use, with 2-3 times the rates of anxiety, depression, suicidal

ideation, and overdose. The reporting system that HB22-1268 creates may increase reimbursement rates related to behavioral health services and ensure that affordable care options are available to support LGBTQ+ folks and all Coloradans. Envision: You supports HB22-1268 to create a system of reporting medicaid reimbursement rates paid to mental health providers.

### Envision:You

The Envision:You mission is to support, educate and empower Colorado's LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer/questioning) community living with a mental health or substance use disorder. Furthermore, we work to inform the public—including elected officials and policymakers—about the disparities in care facing LGBTQ+ people. Finally, we support partners and allies to enhance training, research, education, and resources to assist LGBTQ+ people. To learn more please visit: [www.envision-you.org](http://www.envision-you.org).