

Melody A. Goldberg HB 21-1018 Statement

In September 2017, I adopted a sibling pair after fostering them for a few years. It was a special needs adoption, and both receive Medicaid. I receive adoption assistance for them. At that time, I was living in Indiana and that is where the adoption was finalized. Both my kids are diagnosed with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder and ADHD per testing done in November 2019. My son more recently was diagnosed with Reactive Attachment Disorder and has garnered a slew of other diagnoses as he has cycled thru psych ER's, crisis centers, inpatient treatment, and day treatment. He has extremely severe maladaptive behaviors, engages in unsafe behaviors, including running from the home, has self-harmed on numerous occasions, is extremely aggressive and even violent at times. He has been on various 72 hour holds in the last year, has had the police called on him at school and recently was suspended for 2 days for making serious threats to a classmate. He is 7.5 years old, and he struggles incredibly due to prenatal alcohol and drug exposure and other early traumas. His sister is 11 months older and while she functions higher, she still engages in maladaptive and unsafe behavior at times, is aggressive as well sometimes, provokes her aggressive violent brother, has also run from the home, and struggles in school even with an IEP.

When I moved to Colorado with them in January 2019, I had no idea I would not be able to use our private insurance through my employer and pay co-pays, or even be able to private pay the full cost to non-Medicaid providers, including therapists and psychiatrists. I began looking for therapists and psychiatrists in March 2019. I called so many providers and was turned down by most of them because the kids had Medicaid and they were not Medicaid providers. There were many factors going into my search. Given my kids more severe behaviors and trauma history, I was intent on finding only the most qualified competent trauma-informed providers to treat my kids. I absolutely needed providers who knew exactly what to do with the severe behaviors, were not intimidated by them and were qualified to treat my kids. I needed experienced, seasoned providers. I also needed providers that were closer to my home because I knew my kids could not tolerate long drives each week or that they would escalate on the drive and become unsafe. I also work full time, and I needed after school/after work appointments.

I searched and searched and got the same story over and over. Most would not take my money if they were non-Medicaid providers. I finally found a Medicaid provider 45 minutes away in September of 2019, 6 months after I first began searching. They were not a good fit; they did not know what to do with my kids' really severe behaviors and that became apparent pretty quickly, but they were all I could find. My kids tolerated the drive for 5 months. Then my son decided he was done and let me know that by peeing in my car one day as we tried to leave. That was in February 2020.

I again began searching in April 2020 for new therapists in particular. It was the same story, with the pandemic issues added to that. I finally found a Medicaid provider in August 2020 that I was not thrilled with, but again, it really was my only option. They did not see my kids until December 2020. Both my kids have unlicensed therapists and my daughter's therapist has 1 month experience. This is not ideal given the history, their functioning, and the level of skillset needed to treat my kids.

It is imperative that adoptive families and their kids have access to the best providers suited for their child regardless of whether the provider takes Medicaid. There are many qualified providers out there, Medicaid and otherwise, but not all providers are a good fit for every kid for a variety of reasons. My kids should not be penalized just because they have Medicaid as part of their Adoption Assistance

agreement. They should have access to whomever is the best qualified to treat them, the best fit, the right distance, the right times available—there are so many factors I consider. My kids' treatment has been limited by the fact they happen to be adopted with Medicaid. They have private insurance; I have the ability to pay. They deserve the fighting chance proper treatment will give them.

I urge you to pass HB 21-1018

Witness Signup List

House Health & Insurance
03/02/2021 Upon Adjournment
Testimony - HB21-1018 Adoptive Parents Payments To Outside Providers

First Name	Last Name	Position	Representing	Testifying	Text of Testimony	Registered
Korey Gini	Elger Pingenot	Questions Only For	CDHS Colorado Counties, Inc Colorado Coalition of Adoptive Families (COCAF)	In Person In Person		3/2/2021 8:46 3/2/2021 10:45
Deborah Constance	Cave Vigil	For For	Self Colorado Department of Health Care Policy & Financing	Remotely Remotely		2/25/2021 13:55 3/1/2021 15:57
Rachel	Entrican	Questions Only	Financing	Remotely	Fostering Colorado, the statewide association of private foster care, adoption, and refugee resettlement agencies, fully supports HB-1018. We would like to thank Rep. Bennett and Van Beber for their sponsorship and encourage the members of the committee to support. Thank you.	3/1/2021 17:02
Benjamin Melody	Waters Goldberg	For For	Fostering Colorado Self	Submitted text Uploaded file		3/2/2021 8:03 2/28/2021 16:52