

Review and Summary of H.R 432/ S. 828

The Mental Health Access Improvement Act would in fact amend the current Medicare law to allow for Mental Health Counselors (MHC) and Marriage and Family Therapists to become covered by Medicare providers. This was introduced in the House of Representatives in 2019 and has been reintroduced on January 21, 2021 by Representative Mike Thompson of California and Representative John Katko of New York.

It is important to improve access to mental health services to the nation's population. Debbie Stabenow has said that " So many older Americans are in urgent need of behavioral health services as a result of isolation and stress from the COVID-19 crisis." This bill could give seniors a greater choice of mental health providers so that they are able to receive and have access to the mental healthcare they need. Other advantages of this bill going to action would be that more mental health professionals would be able to join the workforce and alleviate some of the strain on the current nation's behavioural workforce. Lastly, it will also be less costly, lifesaving care for Medicare patients around the nation.

Overall, the Mental Health Access Improvement Act would lift restrictions on certain mental health professionals that have been barred from billing Medicare at the moment. Providing this Medicare recognition to mental health counselors and professionals will increase public's access to addiction and mental health services. This act will increase access to mental health professionals and helping them treat more individuals in the nation.

Pros:

Allows more mental health professionals to join the Medicare network.

Allows more access to more individuals that need mental health assistance

Alleviates some of the access crisis felt by Medicare beneficiaries

Lowers the strain on our nation's behavioral health workforce.

Less costly, lifesaving care for Medicare patients around the nation.

Cons

More school for specific specialization