

January 12th, 2023

To: Senator Mark Warner, Senator Timothy Kaine, Representative John McGuire

Subject: Support for Expanding Medicare Coverage for Licensed Professional Counselors

I hope this message finds you well. I am writing to urge you to support and advocate for expedited Medicare approvals for Licensed Professional Counselors since the passage of S. 828/H.R. 432, the *Mental Health Access Improvement Act of 2021*.

As you know, the need for mental health services is growing rapidly, and many Medicare beneficiaries struggle to access timely care. Currently, LPCs in Virginia are still awaiting approval to provide services under Medicare, limited access to much-needed care, particularly for seniors and individuals with disabilities, who may face barriers in obtaining mental health services through other providers.

S. 828/H.R. 432 allows LPCs to bill Medicare for their services, expanding the pool of qualified professionals available to beneficiaries. Continued approval for the state of Virginia would help alleviate the strain on overburdened psychiatrists and psychologists and ensure that individuals seeking mental health care can receive timely treatment from well-trained counselors.

I respectfully request that you encourage the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to expedite the approval process for this change. With the pressing demand for mental health services, it is critical that we act swiftly to make LPCs part of the Medicare system. Streamlining the approval process would allow beneficiaries to access vital services without unnecessary delays and reduce gaps in care.

By supporting this important legislation by urging Medicare to expedite these changes, you would be making a significant impact on the mental health and well-being of Virginia's seniors and disabled citizens. I sincerely hope that you will work to advance this bill and encourage CMS to implement these changes as quickly as possible.

Thank you for your time, leadership, and consideration. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Nicole Taylor
Licensed Professional Counselor, Board Approved Supervisor
Lynchburg, Virginia