



Greater Washington Society for Clinical Social Work

TO: The Honorable Pamela Beidle, Chair
Members, Senate Finance Committee
The Honorable Malcolm Augustine

FROM: Judith Gallant, LCSW-C, Director, GWSCSW Legislation and Advocacy

DATE: February 28, 2024

RE: **SUPPORT** – Senate Bill 684 – *Health Insurance – Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Benefits – Sunset Repeal and Modification of Reporting Requirements*

The Greater Washington Society for Clinical Social Work (GWSCSW) was established in 1975 to promote and advance the specialization of clinical practice within the social work profession. Through our lobbying, education, community building, and social justice activities, we affirm our commitment to the needs of those in our profession, their clients, and the community at large. On behalf of GWSCSW, we **support** Senate Bill 684.

GWSCSW recognizes the importance of mental health and substance use parity in ensuring equitable access to essential care. Mental health and substance use disorders are pervasive, affecting individuals of all ages, backgrounds, and socioeconomic statuses. Despite the significant advancements in understanding and treating these conditions, disparities persist in accessing adequate and timely care. Achieving parity between mental health, substance use, and physical health services is critical. GWSCSW advocates for policies that mandate health insurance plans to provide coverage for mental health and substance use services on par with coverage for physical health conditions. This includes equitable payment rates, limits on cost-sharing, and comprehensive coverage for evidence-based treatments. An important component is ensuring compliance with federal and state parity laws. As such, GWSCSW recognizes that there are several bills introduced to streamline and strengthen requirements. We support this effort and the process that will take place to determine the best path forward.

As clinical social workers committed to advancing the wellbeing of individuals and communities, we are steadfast in our support for parity policies. By working together, we can ensure that all individuals have access to the care and support they need.

For more information call:

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