PRESS RELEASE:

Senate Passes Bill 2519: An Act to Address Barriers to Care for Mental Health

BOSTON – On Thursday, February 13, the MA Senate passed Senate Bill 2519, a very strong proposal that will help make parity in access to behavioral health treatment a reality here in Massachusetts, which is everyone’s goal.

HLA works with families every single day who have difficulty accessing mental health and substance use care. And even though we are attorneys and try to use the existing mental health parity laws to help our clients receive the services they need, our clients are still left without access far too often because of gaps in the implementation and enforcement of these laws.

We particularly appreciate that this legislation will 1) further empower the Division of Insurance to enforce the parity laws by conducting market conduct examinations, 2) strengthen processes for consumers’ to raise potential parity violations with DOI and MassHealth, and 3) improve transparency within state agencies and health plans in terms of steps being taken to comply with the parity laws.

It is the hope of both Health Law Advocates and the Children’s Mental Health Campaign that these important reforms become law so that consumers and their families who need behavioral services are treated more equitably in our health care system.

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