

The Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act is now federal law. But the law is meaningless unless Health Insurance Companies expand their services.

Why should Health Insurance Companies expand their services?
Because the law requires them to do so.

New Mexico is vastly underserved. The vast majority of people with addiction problems are not being treated. Child and Family Mental Health evaluations are hard to come by. But instead of expanding services the mental health network of providers in New Mexico has been attacked with audits and cutbacks.

We have no long-term residential treatment programs for children, adolescents or adults. We have no Receiving Homes for children coming into Protective Custody for investigations of abuse and neglect.

Our hospital beds are full. Hospital treatment has been cut short. Detoxification services and secure, inpatient treatment for addiction can't be found.

Children, teenagers and adults with Autism Spectrum are on long waiting lists for in-home services, placement, and respite for parents:

Most New Mexicans have no idea that there has been a Mental Health Parity Act. Behind the stigma of mental illness people suffer in hopelessness. We need an education program so that people can reach out to people to break down the barriers to getting help.

Teenagers with relationship conflicts need couples counseling. But school social workers are unavailable. Is waiting for suicide verbalizations and behavior the right thing to do? Should these mental health problems go to the emergency room and a 12-hour wait?

The Mental Health Parity Act should obligate the Health Insurance Companies to develop services wherever a need is identified.

Domestic violence leads to police calls, arrests and family separations for months and years. Why isn't couples counseling readily available from the Health Insurance Companies that take in \$3 billion a year from New Mexicans?

We are proposing today that each city and town of New Mexico conduct a Mental Health Parity Education Week. People must talk to people about depression, and suicide, anger management, substance abuse, parenting and marital problems in the context of health and the right to health care.

We thank Senator Domenici for his federal advocacy for Mental Health Parity, and we thank Senator Ortiz Y Pino for his state advocacy in the fight for right to treatment.

Daniel Kerlinsky M.D. Child Psychiatrist. Albuquerque. 505 884-0112. 10/8/2014