



----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Dr. Irene Kitzman** <DrlreneKitzman@tucson-psychiatrist.com>

Date: Thu, Mar 3, 2022 at 7:45 PM

Subject: MHPAEA

To: public_comments@difi.az.gov <public_comments@difi.az.gov>

Arizona Department of Insurance and Financial Institutions (DIFI)

[100 North 15th Avenue, Suite 261](#)

Phoenix, AZ 85007-2630

Attention: Mary Boatright, JD, CHC, Manager, Life & Health Oversight

public_comments@difi.az.gov

Re: Comments to Proposed MHPAEA Rulemaking

Dear Department of Insurance and Financial Institutions,

We write this letter to join in support of the written comments offered in this cycle by the Arizona Psychiatric Society (APS) in response to proposed rules promulgated by the Department of Insurance and Financial Institutions (DIFI), as required by Arizona Senate Bill SB1523 ("Jake's Law") and ARS § 20-3502 to ensure compliance with the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act (MHPAEA).

In the 2020 legislative session, Jake's Law was adopted by unanimous vote of both chambers of the Arizona legislature and signed into law by Governor Ducey. This mental health omnibus had such widespread support because of the imperative need to address mental health care access in our community and suicide awareness and prevention. A crucial piece of ensuring that care can be accessed is compliance with MHPAEA. The important work to be done under Jake's Law is left unfinished until this final piece of rulemaking is completed.

We support the scope of comments offered by the Arizona Psychiatric Society, with particular emphasis on the assertion that the draft rules are compatible with and did not exceed the comparative analysis requirements of MHPAEA. As such, we request that these rules move forward, with benefit of the clarifying term comments submitted by APS. Implementation of these rules will open the door so the important work of DIFI to provide support to Arizona insurers and consumers and appropriate oversight to compliance with the MHPAEA can begin.

Multiple lines of evidence indicate that the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has profound psychological and social effects. Mental health consequences of the COVID-19 crisis including suicidal behavior are likely to be present for a long time and peak later than the actual pandemic. Jake's Law has the potential to save lives with even more urgency than when it was signed into law in March of 2020. We applaud the work of DIFI to bring forward rulemaking that enforces the MHPAEA with equivalency and stand in support of the comments submitted by the Arizona Psychiatric Society.

Respectfully submitted,

Irene R. Kitzman, M.D.

[801 E. Camino de Fray Marcos](#)

[Tucson, AZ 85718-1913](#)

520.203.8500 Fax: 631.628.1116

Internet communications cannot be guaranteed to be secure or error-free as information can be intercepted, corrupted, lost, destroyed, arrive late or incomplete, or contain viruses. I therefore am not responsible for any errors or omissions that are present in this message, or any attachment, that have arisen as a result of e-mail transmission.

Please request a hard-copy if verification is required.

If you are not currently my patient, information contained in this email should not be construed as establishing a physician-patient relationship, nor as providing medical advice, diagnosis or treatment

Never rely solely on email for important or urgent communications - timely delivery of email is not guaranteed!

This email message is intended only for the use of the individual or entity to which it is addressed and may contain information that is confidential. If you are not the intended recipient you are hereby notified that any dissemination, copying or distribution of this message, including any files associated with this message, is strictly prohibited. Please notify me if you have received this message in error and immediately delete it from your computer.