

From: **Lisa Olson** <lisaolson@me.com>
Date: Fri, Mar 5, 2021 at 10:36 AM
Subject: Jake's Law - concerns about proposed changes
To: <public_comments@difi.az.gov>

Dear AZ Legislature,

The People worked very hard for years to bring Jake's Law to you. It was amazing to see bipartisan support for the bill and to receive unanimous approval from both houses and the governor's signature in the same day. It was an historic effort and success! It took all of us, working together, to make it happen.

A year has passed and much has happened since the last piece of legislation to be passed in 2020 before COVID shut everything down. I'm very concerned about proposed adjustments being made to Jake's Law, which basically undo the thing we set out to secure for our AZ residents: INSURANCE PARITY.

I'm also very concerned about the line of funding, as last year, when the law was instituted, the legislature only determined the source of funding for a single year. This is the regular habit of the republican-majority legislature in AZ. Fund something for a year and abandon it after that. This is a recipe for failure and I hope the legislature determines a permanent line of funding this month.

Some thoughts from the collective who worked together, tirelessly, to make this happen, so that lives can be SAVED:

*The conduct the rulemaking is designed to change is the practice of health care insurers that provide mental health or substance use disorder ("MH/SUD") benefits to provide those benefits on parity with the provision of medical and surgical ("Med/ Surg") benefits. This means that limitations insurers impose on MH/SUD benefits can be **no more stringent or less favorable than the limitations the insurer imposes on Med/Surg benefits.***

The failure of a health care insurer to provide MH/SUD benefits on parity with Med/Surg benefits may result in having an insured unable to obtain MH/SUD medical care because the limitations imposed on those benefits is more stringent or less favorable than imposed on other types of benefits.

We are concerned that the proposed modification will have the result of MORE DEATHS. Parity is CRUCIAL.

Keep the law in its original format, please. This is what the people and medical experts fought for. This is what the legislature agreed to. This is what the governor signed. People are dead because they didn't get access to care before Jake's Law existed. You have the power to ensure that lives continue to be valued and saved by keeping this law in its original format so that insurance companies cannot deny coverage to their patients. NO LOOPHOLES!

Thank you,

Lisa Olson
Mother of 5

Retired teacher
Activist in Mesa