



MEMO

DATE: September 28, 2023
TO: Members of the Wisconsin Legislature
FROM: Alex Ignatowski, Director of State Budget and Government Reform
RE: Support of LRB-4571/1 and LRB-4562/1 to Increase Access to Mental Health Services

IRG Action Fund encourages you to co-sponsor LRB-4571 or LRB-4562, authored by Rep. Gustafson and Sen. Cabral-Guevara, to increase the availability and access to mental health services for Wisconsinites in every corner of the state. This legislation breaks down regulatory burdens, giving residents access to qualified mental health providers from other states.

Background

In March of 2020, Governor Evers signed [Emergency Order 16](#) which allowed out-of-state mental health providers to practice in Wisconsin via telehealth. [For many](#), this increased access to critical mental health services at a time when it was most needed. With the pandemic now behind us, EO 16 has expired and Wisconsin once again now requires mental health providers to be licensed by the state.

The Problem

As Governor Evers recognized when he declared 2023 the “Year of Mental Health”, Wisconsin is in the midst of a mental health crisis. Data from the [National Institute of Mental Health](#) shows that nationally, almost 23% of adults are living with mental health issues, and that increases to 49.5% for children between the ages of 13-18. At the same time, a [2019 Department of Health Services report](#) estimates that 47% of adults with mental illness are unserved and [demand is outpacing supply](#) since the start of the pandemic.

The Solution: Increase Availability and Access to Care

This bill removes the barriers that stop individuals from getting the help they need and allows qualified mental health providers from other states to practice in Wisconsin via telehealth, alleviating the shortage. Under this legislation, providers from other states would be able to practice in Wisconsin if they:

- The provider must be approved to practice within the state they physically reside.
- They would only be allowed to practice within the scope of their home state license.
- The provider must inform the patient of which state(s) they are licensed and what regulatory board has oversight over their practice.

Co-Sponsor LRB-4571 or LRB-4562

With your support, Wisconsin can pass bipartisan legislation that will increase the availability and access to mental health services. IRG Action encourages you to co-sponsor this legislation and help Wisconsinites get the care that they need.