

January 24, 2017

Mollie Zito
Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services
201 S. Grand Ave. East, 3rd Fl.
Springfield, IL 62763-0002

RE: HFS Proposed Amendments to Medical Payment (89 IL Admin Code 140; 40 III Reg 16464) Implementing Public Act 99-621

Dear Honorable Members of JCAR:

On behalf of the Illinois School-Based Health Alliance (ISBHA) and EverThrive Illinois, we thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services proposed amendments to medical payment (89 IL Admin Code 140; 40 III Reg. 16464) implementing public act 99-621.

EverThrive Illinois is a non-profit organization with over 28 years of experience in maternal and child health program and advocacy efforts. EverThrive Illinois works to improve the health of Illinois families over the lifespan. The Illinois School-Based Health Alliance (ISBHA), sponsored by the Child and Adolescent Health Initiative at EverThrive Illinois, brings together a broad-based coalition of organizations and individuals to advocate for and support school-based/linked health centers (SBLHCs) as school and community assets.

A school-based/linked health center (SBLHC) is like a doctor's office in or linked to a school. SBLHCs provide access to primary care, behavioral health, dental, nutrition, and preventive services to nearly 50,000 children and adolescents in Illinois. Roughly 90% of the 63 SBLHCs in Illinois employ or contract with an external entity to provide behavioral health services where students spend the majority of their time: in schools. Many SBLHCs serve individuals from the community as well, and SBLHCs successfully link individuals to behavioral health counseling at higher rates than community health centers.

We applaud the Illinois General Assembly and Department of Healthcare and Family Services for their efforts to ensure that Licensed Clinical Psychologists (LCPs) and Licensed Clinical Social Workers (LCSWs) can enroll as providers in the Medical Assistance Program. By allowing LCPs and LCSWs to receive fee-for-service reimbursement at 75% of the physician reimbursement rate for diagnostic and therapeutic services, including family and group psychotherapy, the State will both improve access and sustainability of these much-needed services for children, mothers, and families alike. We look forward to future conversations with the Illinois Department of Public Health and the Illinois Department of



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Healthcare and Family Services to ensure that the implementation of this proposed rule, once finalized, includes LCPs and LCSWs providing services in SBLHCs and also allows them the same rate.

EverThrive IL feels strongly that the changes made in this proposed rule are positive ones for the children, mothers, and families of Illinois. If there are any questions that we can answer or additional information that we can provide in an effort to help in the JCAR approval process, please feel free to contact us.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this very important public health matter.

Sincerely,

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