



MIKE DEWINE

GOVERNOR
STATE OF OHIO

Executive Order 2023-04D

Establishing the Ohio Mental Health Insurance Assistance Office at the Ohio Department of Insurance and Ensuring Vigilant Compliance with Mental Health and Addiction Parity Insurance Laws

WHEREAS, the Dewine-Husted Administration has prioritized the health and wellness of every Ohioan to enable them to live up to their God-given potential; and

WHEREAS, nearly 600,000 adults in Ohio are estimated to have a chronic psychiatric condition, and 2.3 million adults are estimated to have a mental health condition; and

WHEREAS, more than 900,000 Ohioans are estimated to have a substance use disorder; and

WHEREAS, nearly 550,000 children ages 3-17 in Ohio have one or more emotional, behavioral, or developmental conditions; and

WHEREAS, each day 19 Ohioans die prematurely from unintentional overdose and suicide, ranking these conditions alongside cancer, heart disease, and diabetes as leading causes of death in Ohio; and

WHEREAS, nearly 2.4 million Ohioans live in communities that do not have enough behavioral health professionals, and in the last decade the demand for services increased 353% while the workforce only increased 174%; and

WHEREAS, the General Assembly recently appropriated \$85 million to support the DeWine Administration's planned initiatives to grow and develop the behavioral health workforce, \$90 million to support the development of the crisis care continuum across the state, and \$84 million to fund the Governor's Pediatric Behavioral Health Initiative; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Government Accountability Office reports that consumers with coverage for mental health care experience limited access to in-network mental health providers and broader structural issues and as a result could face higher health care costs, delays in receiving care, or difficulties in finding a provider close to home; and

WHEREAS, mental illness and addiction are treatable health conditions, and people recover to live full lives and contribute to the vitality of our great state; and

WHEREAS, access to commercial and publicly funded mental health and addiction insurance benefits is vital to improved outcomes for Ohioans living with a mental health condition; and

WHEREAS, the RecoveryOhio Advisory Council prioritized alignment of Ohio's parity law with federal law, public education on insurance rights, and enhancing enforcement for consumer protection; and

WHEREAS, as Governor, I signed Senate Bill 284 in 2020, which updated Ohio's regulation of mental health and addiction parity insurance requirements to help protect Ohioans from burdensome restrictions imposed by health insurers; and

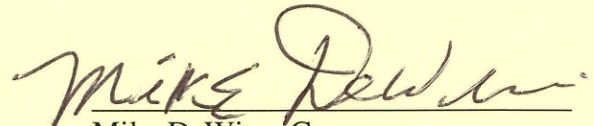
WHEREAS, the need to provide vigilant regulation and oversight of mental health and addiction parity insurance laws and collaborate with insurers and employers is critical to the sustainability of the behavioral health workforce and service capacity; and

WHEREAS, Ohioans would benefit from improved access to mental health and addiction services across the state with improved health outcomes, increased participation in the workforce, and increased contributions to the vitality of our community.

NOW THEREFORE, I, Mike DeWine, Governor of the State of Ohio, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of this State, do hereby order and direct the Ohio Department of Insurance to:

1. Establish the Ohio Mental Health Insurance Assistance Office to help Ohioans identify and utilize their mental health and addiction insurance benefits.
2. Provide consumer protection through education and vigilant regulation of insurers' compliance with mental health and addiction parity insurance laws.
3. Work collaboratively with employers, insurers, healthcare providers, and patient advocacy organizations to develop best practice standards for providing mental health and addiction insurance benefits.

I signed this Executive Order on January 8, 2023, in Cedarville, Ohio, and it will not expire unless rescinded.


Mike DeWine, Governor

ATTEST:

Frank LaRose, Secretary of State

