



ACTION ALERT for SB5960/AB8140

After an incredibly successful 2019 Legislative Session, **SB 5960 / AB 8140**, a bill allowing LCSWs to directly bill Medicaid is expected to be delivered to the Governor's desk soon.

Introduced by Senator Diane Savino (Staten Island) and Assembly member Harry Bronson (Rochester), we need an additional push by YOU.

Please contact the Governor using the template letter below. Add your letterhead and personalize with your own experience. Once completed, simply email a PDF copy to the governor's office at: legislative.secretary@exec.ny.gov with the bill numbers SB 5960/AB 6140 in the subject line and copy mwineburgh@aol.com as well.

Or mail to: Gov. Cuomo New York State Capitol, State St, Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo:

As a Licensed Clinical Social Worker providing vital mental health services at (name of your practice/agency and location), I am writing to respectfully urge you sign SB 5960/AB8140 into law.

This bill would allow Licensed Clinical Social Workers (LCSWs) to directly bill Medicaid for their services. LCSWs represent the largest group of mental health practitioners in the nation. They are often the first to diagnose and treat people with mental disorders and various emotional and behavioral disturbances. LCSWs are essential to a variety of client-centered settings, including community mental health centers, hospitals, substance use treatment and recovery programs, schools, primary health care centers, child welfare agencies, aging services, employee assistance programs, and private practice settings.

Clinical Social Work focuses on the emotional, and mental health of individuals, couples, families, and groups. The profession includes the scope of practice of the LMSW, allows the diagnosis of mental, emotional, behavioral, addictive and developmental disorders and disabilities, the development and implementation of appropriate assessment-based treatment plans; and the provision of crisis oriented psychotherapy, including brief, short-term and long-term psychotherapy and psychotherapeutic treatment. In addition, LCSWs are the only licensed mental health professionals that assess the person-in-environment. This is the essential practice-guiding principle that highlights the importance of understanding an individual in light of the environmental contexts in which that person lives and acts (family finances, connections, living situation, religion, employment, etc...).

Further, Article 163 of the Education Law authorizes a qualified LCSW to practice mental health counseling, marriage and family therapy, creative arts therapy and psychoanalysis. Given the breadth of such a scope, LCSWs are a vital component of the community mental health system and as such, should be utilized to broaden access to crucial mental health services.

Thank you for your consideration. Should you have any follow up questions, I can be reached at.....
(insert email address).

Sincerely,