

The Parity @ 10 Compliance Campaign – Ohio Coalition

Next year will mark the 10th anniversary of the passage of the landmark Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act. And yet, the law's promise of non-discriminatory access to mental health and substance use disorder treatment has not been fully realized. The Parity@10 Compliance Campaign will unite local and national advocates in ten states (5 in 2018; 5 in 2019) to advocate with policymakers and regulators for full parity enforcement – with the goal of ensuring that the law lives up to its promise nationwide.

Ohio is one of five states selected to launch the campaign in 2018 based on the work that organizations and consumers have been doing to advocate for comprehensive health insurance coverage for people with mental health and substance use disorders (NY, NJ, MD, IL, OH).

Ohio coalition stakeholders will collaborate with the Parity @ 10 national partners who have deep expertise in the Parity Law – from advocacy, legislation and regulatory perspectives. The Ohio Council of Behavioral Health & Family Services Providers has been asked by the national partners to anchor the Ohio coalition.

Parity @ 10 Compliance Campaign Mission and Goals

Parity @ 10 is a three-year campaign to establish effective models for robust enforcement of the Parity Act in ten states and to disseminate those models across the country. *The campaign's goal is to ensure that insurance carriers and State Medicaid programs offer full parity compliant substance use and mental health benefits and put an end to a complaint-driven enforcement model that forces consumers to fight for the health care services they are entitled to receive.*

Parity @ 10 State Campaigns

Parity enforcement strategies must be tailored to each state's unique landscape. Parity @ 10 will build on existing parity compliance advocacy led by an activated coalition of advocates, health care providers, consumers, providers, family members and other allies that understand the need for comprehensive treatment coverage. State coalition partners will:

- Identify the insurance standards in private and public insurance that have created the greatest barriers to care;
- Identify and pursue solutions and strategies that state stakeholders deem most effective with key state officials and legislators, using both legislative and regulatory processes to maximize policy reform;
- Pursue State Attorney General involvement in enforcement efforts; and
- Pursue a comprehensive communications strategy to educate the public about Parity Act protections and influence policy makers.

Parity @10 Partners

Four national organizations that comprise the Addiction Solutions Campaign – the Legal Action Center, National Center on Substance Abuse and Addiction, Partnerships for Drug-Free Kids and Treatment Research Institute at PHMC – and The Kennedy Forum will work with State coalitions to build state enforcement capacity.

These national partners will work with State coalitions to offer:

- Provider and consumer education on the Parity Act;
- In-depth and sustained technical assistance on legislative and regulatory initiatives to enforce the law; and
- Communications capacity to inform and educate consumers and influence policy makers.

The Campaign Begins

Together and with technical assistance from the national partners, the Ohio Coalition will:

- Identify barriers to treatment in private and public insurance that can be addressed through Parity Act enforcement;
- Develop a strategic plan that prioritizes issues over a three-year period and identifies legislative and regulatory actions and State Attorney General engagement to pursue;
- Develop a work plan that identifies the areas in which in-depth technical assistance from national partners is needed, including:
 - Provider and consumer education
 - Collection of complaints and stories
 - Drafting legislation, administrative agency interventions and regulations
 - Engagement with the State Attorney General
- Collaborate on communications to educate the public and influence policy makers through opinion pieces and social media and website content development.

The Ohio work will begin with a formation meeting in March 2018.