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CHECKING IN AND THINKING AHEAD

A LETTER FROM THE EDITORS AND AN UPDATE ON THE FALL 2020 NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The editors of The Counseling Advocate send our gratitude to everyone who has engaged in the critical processes of professional and client advocacy this year. As members of the OCA Government Relations Committee, we are grateful for the opportunity to engage with members and learn about the work you're doing. This connection enhances our service to the field and the clients we serve. We also look forward to connecting with you each quarter through this newsletter. It is an honor to provide you with OCA GRC news, and we are eager to continue this work in 2021.

--Maddie Stevens and Staci Tessmer, editors of The Counseling Advocate

We also thank those who filled out the Fall 2020 OCA GRC Needs Assessment survey, which has helped our committee focus efforts as we move into 2021. Results from the survey (n=99) ranked the following seven agenda items, respectively:

1. ACA Interstate Compact for portability of licensure between states
2. Ban Conversion Therapy for Minors in Ohio
3. Universal Licensing Law (requires Ohio to reciprocate licensure between states) -- Senate Bill 246
4. Insurance Parity Bill -- Senate Bill 254
5. Mental Health Hold Expansion to include counselors
6. COVID-19 Response
7. Prescriptive Authority Expansion

We will be in touch with those who expressed interest in helping with the above issues as we begin to mobilize our efforts.

If you would like to engage with the GRC in 2021, please email Ellise.raghavan@rockets.utoledo.edu.

-Ellie Raghavan, OCA GRC Intern
Medicaid Updates

- Medicaid has filed amendments regarding telehealth (OAC 5160-1-18), fidelity review requirements for mental health assertive community treatment service (OAC 5160-27-04), and mental health intensive home based treatment services (OAC 5160-27-02).
- OCA continues to advocate for 100% Medicaid reimbursement for counselors. On November 8, 2020, OCA provided comments to the Ohio Department of Medicaid requesting an amendment to rule 5160-8-05 to allow 100% reimbursement for counselors. On December 2, the ODM responded stating they were not modifying reimbursement rates to providers covered by this rule. OCA will continue to this advocacy effort.

Legislative Advocacy Day 2021

LAD is scheduled for April 13th 2021. We are planning to meet in person in Columbus, Ohio. However, if the event is unable to take place in person, we will conduct a virtual event on the same date. It will be either in person or virtual, not a hybrid. See you then!

During the GRC annual legislative update at AOC 2021, Molly Mottram and Jana Jarrett from the Ohio Department of Insurance conducted the ODI Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Benefits Training. During the session, we discussed why the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equality Act is so important. discussed the role ODI plays in regulating Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Benefits, helped providers understand how to utilize the complaint and appeals process on behalf of their patients, and explained the tools and resources ODI provides to help navigate Mental Health and Substance Use Benefits.

More information can be found here.

Thank you to Molly and Jana for joining us!

Voices at work: Since the vote to approve the changes in training supervision, the board has yet to move forward with enacting those changes. The board has since identified the chief concern as LPC's inability to access LPCC-S who are willing to conduct supervision. OCA is committed to provide the board alternative solutions to the identified concerns while maintaining 100% of training supervision within the field of counseling.