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**U.S. SENATORS TINA SMITH, DEBBIE STABENOW, REPS. PAUL TONKO, BRIAN FITZPATRICK, DAVID TRONE REINTRODUCE LEGISLATION EXPANDING MENTAL HEALTH CARE ACCESS, INCREASE MEDICAID REIMBURSEMENT RATE**

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WASHINGTON – Today, U.S. Senator Tina Smith (D-Minn.), a member of the Senate Health Committee, joined by Sen. Debbie Stabenow (D-Mich.), a member of the Senate Finance Committee, to announce reintroduced legislation to expand access to mental health services for low-income families and children, the elderly, and people living with disabilities. The Medicaid Bump Act would increase the federal reimbursement rate for mental and behavioral health care services under Medicaid, which covers one fifth of all Americans with mental health disorders. A House companion bill was introduced by U.S. Representatives Paul D. Tonko (D-NY-20), Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA-01) and David Trone (D-MD-06).

“Too many people don’t have access to the mental or behavioral health care they need, and providers struggle to provide that care because they don’t get reimbursed enough for their services.” **said Senator Smith.** “This bill will improve equity in mental and behavioral health care by helping patients access the care that they need and ensuring providers get paid fairly. I want anyone suffering from a mental health issue to know they are not alone. We can all help break the stigma by talking about it, and then we have to go to work to get people the services they need.”


"We should treat health care above the neck the same way we treat health care below the neck. Currently, too many folks don't have access to affordable behavioral health care in our country. Senator Smith and I introduced this bill to help close the gap in services and help people get the care they need," **said Senator Stabenow.**

"Mental and behavioral health services should be readily available and affordable to all who need it," **said Congressman**

**Tonko.** "Unfortunately, systemic underinvestment has left far too many out in the cold and without a place to seek these vital resources. Our Medicaid Bump Act begins to right that wrong, bolstering availability to providers by increasing the federal reimbursement rate for mental and behavioral health care services under Medicaid. I'm proud to join Senators Smith and Stabenow and Representatives Fitzpatrick and Trone to introduce this legislation, and I urge my colleagues to support this bill."

"About thirty-five percent of Medicaid-covered individuals that are struggling with mental health concerns report that they are not receiving treatment," **said Congressman Fitzpatrick.** "As Co-Chair of the Bipartisan Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Task Force, I'm proud to co-lead this bipartisan, bicameral legislation that will provide an incentive for states to increase their Medicaid spending on behavioral health services in order to expand access to care in areas where the demand outstrips the supply of service providers."

"When one in five Americans are fighting mental illness, we must ensure that treatment is accessible and affordable for every one of them. So it's a shame that for so many Americans, this care remains out of reach," **said Congressman Trone, co-founder of the Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Task Force.** "The Medicaid Bump Act will help solve this issue by incentivizing increased state-level coverage of mental health and substance use disorder treatment. We must tackle this crisis from every angle, and I thank Senators Smith and Stabenow and Representatives Tonko and Fitzpatrick for partnering with me on this effort."

 English

The Medicaid program is the largest payer of behavioral health services in the United States; however, 35 percent of Medicaid-covered individuals with significant mental health concerns report not receiving treatment. Behavioral health providers—including adolescent and pediatric specialists—are often reimbursed by Medicaid at low rates. Rural and underserved communities face a shortage of behavioral health providers, particularly in rural and underserved communities. One Minnesota family struggled (<https://www.startribune.com/minnesota-mental-health-care-crisis-bed-shortage-low-reimbursement/600258431/>) for over a week to find an inpatient treatment bed available in Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wisconsin, Iowa or Illinois for their 13-year-old son who was at risk of harming himself and others. These barriers exacerbate inequities in access to mental and behavioral health care services for thousands of Americans and put strain on emergency departments who are on the frontlines of caring for those experiencing a mental health emergency.

The *Medicaid Bump Act of 2024* would create a financial incentive to increase State Medicaid spending on behavioral health services to improve access to these services. Specifically, this bill would:

1. Provide an enhanced Medicaid Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) rate of 90 percent for State Medicaid spending on mental health and substance use disorder services in excess of 2019 levels.
2. Require States to use the additional federal funds as a supplement rather than a replacement of State funding levels, and to use the funds to increase capacity, efficiency, and quality of behavioral health services.
3. Direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) to define which services qualify as eligible behavioral health services for the enhanced FMAP.
4. Require HHS to provide annual reports on the impact of increased federal Medicaid reimbursement on the utilization of behavioral health services in each State.