

May 1, 2026

Dear Members of the Delaware General Assembly,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we write to express our strong support for legislation to strengthen coverage standards for mental health and substance use disorder care in Delaware ([SB 22](#)) - "Fair Standards in Mental Health Care" bill.

Delaware is facing a growing behavioral health crisis, and too many residents, including children, are unable to access timely, appropriate care, even when they have private insurance. Coverage on paper does not always translate into real access, leaving patients and families navigating delays, denials, and limited provider availability at the moment they need care most.

But despite the rising demand for help, across the state, individuals and families continue to face significant barriers when seeking timely, evidence-based mental health and substance use treatment. While federal and state parity laws require coverage, too many patients still encounter delays, denials, or limitations that prevent them from accessing the care they need. This legislation takes important steps to close those gaps and ensure that coverage works as intended.

Specifically, the bill would:

- Require coverage of the full continuum of medically necessary care for mental health and substance use conditions, consistent with generally accepted clinical standards.
- Ensure that medical necessity determinations are based on independent, evidence-based clinical guidelines, rather than insurers' internal criteria.
- Improve timely access to care by setting clear standards for network adequacy and requiring coverage of out-of-network care when in-network providers are not available.
- Strengthen protections against restrictive utilization management practices that can delay or disrupt care, including limits on prior authorization and concurrent review in key circumstances.
- Expand access to life-saving medications and ensure they are available without unnecessary barriers.

Together, these provisions will help ensure that patients can access the right care, at the right time, in the right setting, without facing unnecessary administrative hurdles.

This legislation is especially critical at a time when demand for behavioral health services continues to rise. [One in five](#) residents experience a mental health issue each year. Delays in care not only worsen health outcomes for individuals, but also increase costs across the healthcare system, including avoidable emergency department visits and hospitalizations. By aligning coverage with clinical best practices, this bill will improve outcomes while supporting a more efficient and effective healthcare system.

Importantly, this proposal builds on Delaware's strong foundation in advancing mental health parity and reflects a commitment to ensuring that coverage translates into real access to care.

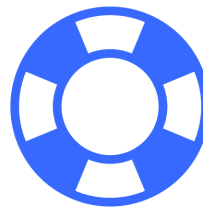
We respectfully urge you to support this legislation and ensure that all Delawareans can access timely, evidence-based mental health and substance use disorder treatment.

Sincerely,

Ability Network of Delaware



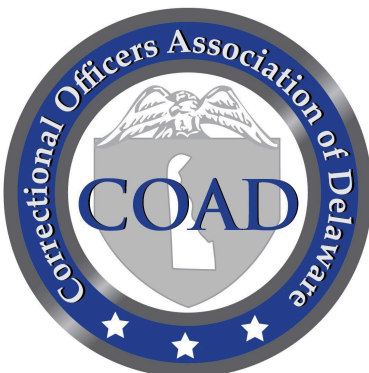
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, Delaware



**American  
Foundation  
for Suicide  
Prevention**

**Delaware**

Correctional Officers Association of Delaware



Delaware Association of School Psychologists



Mental Health Association in Delaware



National Alliance on Mental Health,  
Delaware



Sean's House



Delaware School Nurses Association



Outloud Delaware



Delaware State Education Association



Delaware Healthcare Association



Annie Slease, Mental Health Advocate