



**Minnesota
Psychiatric
Society**



March 22, 2022

Paul Utke, Chair

Members of the Senate Health and Human Services Finance and Policy Committee

RE: Support SF 61 (Koran); Removing Barriers to Medication Access for Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Patients

Dear Chairman Utke and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for your consideration of SF 61 (Koran). Under current Minnesota law, Medicaid does not allow for provider-administered medicines (injectables) to be filled as a pharmacy benefit. Without this option, medical providers must purchase the medicine ahead of giving it to their patients and seek reimbursement after. This “buy and bill” practice creates unnecessary access barriers for patients and strains small healthcare provider practices, including:

- Forcing rural and small practice providers to take on the full financial responsibility is financial discrimination. Many providers often do not have the means to “buy and bill” these medications and ultimately, it is their patients who suffer because they have to seek medication alternatives.
- Restrictions on mental health medications harm patients and likely drive up both medical and prison costs. USC Schaeffer Center for Health Policy and Economics found that patients who reported medication access or continuity problems were 3.6 times more likely to have a significant adverse event, including emergency visits, psychiatric hospitalization, increase in suicidal or violent ideation or behavior, homelessness, or incarcerations in prison or detention in jail.¹

Medicaid patients should have the same access to necessary injectable medications as any other insured patient in the state. Minnesota is one of only two states that still excludes injectables from its pharmacy benefit for the treatment of substance use and mental health disorders.

We encourage the committee to support SF 61 to remove the exclusionary practice on injectable medications.

Sincerely,

Coalition of Recovery Investment
Mental Health Minnesota
Minnesota Pharmacists Association
Minnesota Psychiatric Society
Nystrom & Associates

¹ [Medicaid Prescription Drug Policies and Medication Access and Continuity: Findings From Ten States](#)

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Psychiatric Services 2009 60:5, 601-610.