



Memo of Opposition  
AB 670 Bronson / SB 6212 Kennedy

*An act to amend the insurance law, in relation to health insurance coverage of outpatient care provided by a mental health practitioner*

The National Association of Social Workers, NYS and NYC Chapters, the New York State Society for Clinical Social Work, New York State Psychiatric Association and the New York State Psychological Association (they need to review new memo) **strongly oppose** AB 670 Bronson/SB 6212 (Kennedy), a bill seeking to require blanket health insurance policies to provide coverage for outpatient treatment by mental health practitioners licensed pursuant to Article 163 of the Education Law.

As the bill memo notes “current law does not explicitly include mental health practitioners as allowable providers of outpatient mental health services.” Current law allows only for such reimbursement to practitioners holding a medical degree, a PhD in psychology or a Licensed Clinical Social Worker - R (a master’s level degree with two examinations and six years of highly prescribed supervised experience in the diagnosis and treatment of mental illnesses). Conversely, Article 163 licensees post graduate training requires only roughly 40 weeks (depending which of the Article 163 profession) and passing an exam. In addition, only half their post graduate work is required to be face to face contact. Requiring insurance to reimburse such providers **WITHOUT INCLUSION OF LCSW’s** who have a master’s degree, two exams and three years of supervised experience (all face to face contact) in diagnosis and psychotherapy is nonsensical.

Due to their limitations of their education and training mental health practitioners are not authorized by Article 163 of the Education Law to diagnose mental illness. In addition, Article 163 stipulates, “It shall be deemed practicing outside the boundaries of his or her professional competence for a person licensed pursuant to this article, in the case of treatment of any serious mental illness, to provide any mental health service for such illness on a continuous and sustained basis without a medical evaluation of the illness by, and consultation with, a physician regarding such illness.”

While the above organizations support insurance reimbursement for mental health and substance abuse care and treatment, this legislation would substantially lower the education and training threshold otherwise required for reimbursement for psychiatric, psychological and clinical social work AND CANNOT PASS AS DRAFTED.

We strongly urge you to amend AB 670 (Bronson)/SB 6212 (Kennedy) to include Licensed Clinical Social Workers.