



JOEL KITCHENS

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 1ST ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

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Contact: Rep. Joel Kitchens
(608) 266-5350

Assembly passes Rep. Kitchens' mental health bill

MADISON, Wis. – Rep. Joel Kitchens, R-Sturgeon Bay, joined his Assembly colleagues on Tuesday in passing several legislative proposals aimed at improving healthcare outcomes in the state.

One of the bills, of which Rep. Kitchens is the lead co-author, is designed to strengthen access to mental health services throughout Wisconsin.

AB 63 modernizes the state's psychology laws by removing barriers that make it challenging for healthcare organizations to hire psychologists, for psychologists to enter the workplace and for residents to receive mental health services.

The legislation also expands the licensing exemptions for professionals engaged in activities related to psychology and removes red tape in current state statutes.

“While we have recently made great strides toward improving mental health services for our citizens, Wisconsin is still near the bottom in several critical areas,” Rep. Kitchens said. “As our needs continue to rise and our state's aging mental health specialists retire, we need to take a proactive approach in ensuring our residents can get the care necessary to lead healthy and productive lives.”

The state Assembly also passed a number of other bills that do the following:

- Prevents insurance companies from denying policies to patients with pre-existing conditions if provisions of the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act are no longer enforceable
- Lowers prescription drug prices by implementing regulations on pharmacy benefit managers
- Assists hospitals and healthcare providers with navigating through lingering issues related to COVID-19
- Allows dentists to administer COVID-19 and flu vaccines

“Over the years, we have learned that we need to improve certain healthcare services in our state, and that has become even more evident with the COVID-19 pandemic,” Rep. Kitchens said. “I am confident that the bills we passed this week will give Wisconsinites better peace of mind by eliminating unneeded obstacles standing in the way of accessing affordable and reliable healthcare.”

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