



# WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

P. O. Box 8953 Madison, WI 53707-7882

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For Immediate Release

Contact: Rep. Sanfelippo 608-266-0620  
Contact: Rep Bernier 608-266-9172

Rep. Sanfelippo and Rep. Bernier to propose changes to the Medical Assistance (MA) program

Rep. Joe Sanfelippo (R-West Allis) and Rep. Kathy Bernier (R-Lake Hallie) are teaming up to propose changes to the Medical Assistance (MA) program that will increase access to mental health therapy for Wisconsin children, simplify Medical Assistance (MA) rules and increase psychiatric treatment opportunities especially in rural areas.

By simplifying the authorization process, children will be able to access in-home therapy without first failing in an outpatient setting. Qualified families with children in day treatment programs will be able to complement gains made there with in-home therapy as well.

The bill will also make improvements to MA reimbursement policies that will expand the supply of psychiatric services throughout the state. The entire state is experiencing a shortage of psychiatrists with rural areas hit especially hard. Expanding opportunities for telepsychiatry will immediately address shortages and waiting lists by increasing access to psychiatrists.

“These common sense reforms will greatly increase access to psychiatric care and improve a healing environment for children dealing with severe emotional disturbances,” said Rep. Sanfelippo.

“I am encouraged that rural communities, like the ones I represent, will have early mental health intervention opportunities for their children,” Rep. Bernier said.

These recommendations were included in the report prepared by the Speakers Taskforce on Mental Health.

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