



# **118th MAINE LEGISLATURE**

## FIRST REGULAR SESSION-1997

Legislative Document

No. 1500

H.P. 1062

House of Representatives, March 12, 1997

An Act to Increase Access to and Affordability of Mental Health Services.

Reference to the Committee on Health and Human Services suggested and ordered printed.

OSEPH W. MAYO, Clerk

Presented by Representative MITCHELL of Portland. Cosponsored by Senator PARADIS of Aroostook and Representatives: LEMAIRE of Lewiston, MAYO of Bath, TOWNSEND of Portland.

#### Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

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Sec. 1. 24-A MRSA §4234-A, sub-§8, as enacted by PL 1995, c. 407, §10, is amended to read:

б 8. Contracts; providers. Subject to approval by the superintendent pursuant to section 4204 and to the health 8 maintenance organization's credentialling policy as long as that policy complies with subsection 8-A, a health maintenance 10 organization incorporated under this chapter shall allow providers to contract, -- subject -- to -- the -- health -- maintenance 12 organization's-credentialling-policy, for the provision of mental health services within the scope of the provider's licensure.

#### Sec. 2. 24-A MRSA §4234-A, sub-§8-A is enacted to read:

8-A. Mental health services provided by counseling professionals. A health maintenance organization that issues 18 individual or group health care contracts providing coverage for 20 mental health services shall offer coverage for those services when performed by a counseling professional who is licensed by 22 the State pursuant to Title 32, chapter 119 to assess and treat interpersonal and intrapersonal problems, has at least a masters 24 degree in counseling or a related field from an accredited educational institution and has been employed as counselor for at 26 least 2 years. Any contract providing coverage for the services of counseling professionals pursuant to this subsection may be 28 subject to any reasonable limitations, maximum benefits, coinsurance, deductibles or exclusion provisions applicable to overall benefits under the contract. This subsection applies to 30 all contracts executed, delivered, issued for delivery, continued 32 or renewed in this State on or after January 1, 1998. For purposes of this subsection, all contracts are deemed renewed no later than the next yearly anniversary of the contract date. 34

### **SUMMARY**

This bill extends to health maintenance organizations law that currently applies to nonprofit hospital or medical service 40 organizations, individual health care insurers and group health 42 care insurers. This bill requires health maintenance organizations issuing mental health services contracts to offer coverage for those services when performed by a counseling 44 professional who is licensed to assess and treat interpersonal 46 and intrapersonal problems, has at least a masters degree from an accredited educational institution and has been employed as a counselor for at least 2 years. 48