



Washington State Legislature

May 7, 2020

The Honorable Governor Jay Inslee
Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 40002
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

Dear Governor Inslee:

The coronavirus has had a daunting effect on lives across the globe and dealing with an unknown enemy is not something any of us thought we would be doing as this year began. It is a challenge for all of us, but now more than ever we need leadership to remember those who are suffering from mental illness and substance abuse. We are reaching a very critical juncture.

I am concerned for those whose mental health treatment has been interrupted. While we must not lose focus on our public health and the economy, it is a quality of life issue for those who are not able to receive the mental health services that they need. I am requesting on behalf of them and their loved ones that telehealth waivers be granted to out of state providers. One case in particular stands out as his family reached out to me in desperation when the in-state licensed provider had to physically discharge patients due to a COVID outbreak. Their son began to receive telehealth treatment and was doing very well according to his family.

The insurance approved the payment, but the Department of Health denied it and said, *"we are not currently considering any waiver requests related to telehealth."* You could always reach out to the Governor to ask for his assistance or make an executive order."

The longer we operate under lockdown type conditions, without the proper resources to help where it is needed most, the more vulnerable people become. Especially those who are already fragile. There is a desperate need to continued care without interruption. This young man will be **discharged Friday the 8th of May** if no waiver is granted. I fear that the negative impact could have serious and undue setbacks for this individual, his family and many others without proper mental health care. Thank you for your consideration in this most urgent matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kelly".

Kelly Chambers State Representative – LD 25