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Greetings to all of our MEMHCA brothers and sisters,

My name is Bethany Leavitt and I am currently serving as the legislative chair on the board of directors for MEMHCA. I am reaching out to you now during this critical transition period where we face both danger and tremendous opportunity.

***We will be reaching out periodically to inform and engage YOU in what must become a strong, united collaboration to create a better quality of life for ourselves, our profession, and the populations we aim to serve. Let's unite however we can to remedy the pervasive states of chronic disconnection that fuel dysfunction and suffering, and help one another to build authentic, healing connection with ourselves, each other, and the world around us.***

Today I would like to ask two things; how can we better serve you? And, what are you doing to help promote the profession? Note that advocacy for our profession is also about increasing accessibility of services to populations in need of our specialized service. Please read the brief points ahead.

- ***How can we harness current opportunities that will determine the future of our profession and those we hope to serve?*** Right now we have the chance to make a monumental advocacy impact toward LCPC's being fully recognized as qualified mental health clinicians (LCPC, LMFT), who are therefore reimbursable by Medicare at the *federal (national) level*.
- ***Why is it critical that we become approved providers with "billable status" under Medicare at the federal level?*** Medicare laws and regulations set the precedent for all states and other insurance companies to follow. A provider like you can choose whether or not to seek Medicare reimbursement, however, if we are excluded as qualified providers from federal legislative regulations we run the high risk of exclusion from future insurance laws and statutes at both state and federal levels. For example, without inclusion in the current Medicare regulations, if Medicare-for-all becomes the standard insurance in the future, then LCPC's and LMFT's would NOT be included.
- ***What are YOU doing to seize the opportunities around you, and to uplift your profession as well as those you serve?*** Although it is a federal bill that we hope to pass, at the state level we can still be instrumental in pressuring federal politicians to pass it. The Dalai Lama stated, "If you think you are too small to make a difference, try sleeping with a mosquito."
- ***Current Status with New Medicare Bill:***  
The federal bills are **S. 286 and H.R. 945: The Mental Health Access Improvement Act**. In Maine we have been able to educate our federal congress people (Jared Golden, Chellie Pingree Susan Collins, Angus King) who have now signed on as co-sponsors to the bills. However, our

Congress-people need to become proactive in encouraging their peers to also become co-sponsors.

- ***What can you do?***

We need you to reach out to friends, family and colleagues in other states urging them to contact their members of both the House and Senate to sign on to S. 286 and H.R. 945. To see which states have signed on, visit <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/senate-bill/286> AND <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/945>

For a sample letter and to locate politicians for all states, visit:  
<https://www.amhca.org/advocacy/medicare>

*Please share these links with your friends, family, and colleagues in other states.*

*If you have peers and colleagues in Maine who are not currently members of MEMHCA, please encourage them to join our organization to increase advocacy efforts and so they can receive member discounts on future conferences.*

### **Important General Updates To Be Aware Of:**

1) Be on the lookout for a short survey to assess the professional needs of LCPC's across the state in order to better continue our advocacy efforts, included but not limited to establishing appropriate legislation. A general goal is to gain and solidify our inclusion as recognized clinicians and thereby increase access to services for those who benefit from our specialized training and practice.

2) Save the date, **October 15, 2021** for the MEMHCA annual conference. The theme is Cultivating Resilience in the Face of Adversity. Keynote speaker is Travis Mills: "Never give up. Never Quit."

***The MEMHCA team thanks you in advance for your time and consideration! Together, we can do so much more.***

In service, unity, and gratitude,

Bethany Noel Leavitt - Legislative Chair, MeMHCA