

Members present:

Chairman Jeffrey	Assemblyman Sena
Vice Chairman Robinson	Assemblyman FitzPatrick
Assemblyman Bennet	Assemblyman Rusk
Assemblyman Chaney	Assemblyman Tanner
Assemblyman Horn	

Members excused:

Assemblyman Bremner
Assemblyman Weise

Guests present: See attached list .

Chairman Jeffrey called the meeting to order at 3:10 p.m. He stated that members Bremner and Weise were excused due to their participation in the TRPA trip. He announced the purpose of the meeting would be to hear AB 207 then AB 216 and then AB 163.

AB 207: Mr. Frank Daykin, Legislative Counsel, addressed the committee on the necessity for this bill. He stated that the changes in the bill would remove an apparent conflict in the statute and would eliminate the original effective date which is no longer necessary. Mr. Daykin asked Mr. Terzich if he agreed with this correction, since he was involved in the drafting of the original wording of the statute. Mr. Terzich stated that the change was completely satisfactory to him. This concluded testimony on this bill.

AB 216: Mr. Daykin continued with this bill and stated that the corrections in this bill were necessary in order to have the notice provisions removed. He stated that the notice provisions now are covered under the open meeting law passed last session. There were no questions and this concluded Mr. Daykin's testimony.

AB 163: Chairman Jeffrey stated that the bill was a committee introduction requested by the psychologists so that they could be reimbursed under medical insurance policies the same as medical doctors.

Dr. Dick Lewis, representing the Nevada Certified Psychologists, was first to testify on this bill at the request of Dr. Hess of UNLV. He stated that approximately 30 states currently have similar legislation and that since some of those states are very populated, approximately 2/3 of the people covered by health plans have coverage under this type of system. He said that the federal insurance plans also have this type of coverage. He said, too, that he believed that the Health Insurance Companies of America approve this bill. He stated that the primary thrust of the bill was to allow people freedom of choice as to whether they would like to be cared for by a regular medical doctor, psychiatrist or psychologist.

Dr. Robinson asked if the coverage they were asking for would be currently covered on policies which provided for payments on services of psychiatrists. Dr. Lewis stated that there are several policies now which do cover psychologists as well as psychiatrist, but this bill would make it so that when a new policy was being written there could be no economical discrimination between the two fields.

Mr. Rusk asked if this simply meant that if there was coverage in the policy for psychiatric help that this would make it possible for the patient to choose to go to a psychologist instead of a psychiatrist. Dr. Lewis stated that this would be so so long as psychiatric help was included in the policy.

Mr. Tanner pointed out that the bill referred to a licensed physician and not specifically to psychiatrists on line 6. Chairman Jeffrey stated that when Dr. Hess had asked that the bill be drafted, he meant for it to include services both by a regular doctor and a psychiatrist (who is also an M.D.) in some cases of treatment, such as treatment for depression, which treatment might be rendered by a psychologist.

Mr. FitzPatrick asked Dr. Lewis how the fees for treatment by psychologists compared to fees charged by psychiatrists. Dr. Lewis stated that though they didn't compare fee schedules that he did have a member of his office who is a psychiatrist whose fees are the same as the other members of the office who are psychologists. Mr. FitzPatrick pointed out that the health care costs in Nevada are the highest in the nation, and, that as an insurance agency dealing in this area, he wanted to know if this change could possibly lower health care costs to the consumer and have an ultimate effect on rates. He also stated that currently some policies already limit the spending in the area of psychiatric care. Dr. Lewis stated that though he was not coming before the committee to argue a reduction in costs were the bill passed, it might have that effect in the long run by patients having a broader choice and thus making it more competitive.

In answer to questions from Mr. Sena and Mr. Tanner, Dr. Lewis stated that the difference between psychologists and psychiatrists is that psychologists must have a Phd and one year of experience and then pass a series of tests in order to become certified. He stated that he thought there were approximately 40 certified psychologists in the state and that the requirements were very stringent. In comparison he noted that the psychiatrist had to complete medical school with a major in the area of behavioral sciences and is capable of prescribing medication for the patient. He stated that generally the therapy given by both of them were similar except for the use of drugs.

Tom Stapleton, M.D., representing the Nevada Psychiatric Association, was next to speak and pointed out that psychiatrists have to complete medical school, four years of post-graduate work, being involved in seminars and training and treating patients, all under supervision before being eligible for certification by the Board of Psychiatry and Neurology. He stated that these requirements were really quite different than those for psychologists and they objected to the statement that their form of treatment was generally the same as psychologists. He submitted to the committee a letter stating their position and it is attached hereto and marked as Exhibit "A".

He also stated that one of their prime objections to the bill was that it would interfere with the relationship between the consumer and the insurance writer by mandating the inclusion of one kind of health care provider, when practices of this kind have not been done in the past. He stated that there are many policies available which do now cover psychologists and if the consumer wanted this type of coverage, it is available by looking into the various policy provisions. He stated also that if you allowed this kind of mandatory inclusion for the psychologists, the nurses, family counselors and other people who practiced similar treatment procedures would want to be included in future legislation of this type. He also said that he agreed with Mr. FitzPatrick in that most policies did discriminate between fees allowed for regular physicians and psychiatrists, but that his profession had traditionally accepted that difference as a fact of doing business.

Georgia Massey of the Insurance Division was next to speak of this bill stating that certified psychologist was too broad a term to be used in the bill and they would suggest the use of the term certified clinical psychologist as this change would narrow down the type of treatment covered by most policies. In answer to a question from Mr. Sena, Ms. Massey stated that with that change they would be in agreement with the bill.

Milo Terzich stated to the committee that he had lobbied last session for the Health Insurance Association of America, and that in the 59th Session an identical bill had been introduced and that there had been some amendments suggested to the bill at that time and they are attached and marked as Exhibit "B".

After a discussion among the committee members regarding the wording in the bill and what effect the amendments in Exhibit "B" would have, Mr. Sena suggested that the committee try to find out, through the Research Department, if any other states had model laws in this area and bring that information back to the next discussion on this bill.

Chairman Jeffrey stated that he had a bill for committee introduction, by request and asked the committee's approval for introduction. No one objected to it.

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There being no further business to come before the committee, Chairman Jeffrey adjourned the meeting at 3:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Chandler
Linda Chandler
Secretary

ASSEMBLY COMMERCE COMMITTEE

GUEST LIST

Print

NAME (Please print)	REPRESENTING (organization)	WISH TO SPEAK	
		Yes	No.
DICK LEWIS	Memphis Center Psychological	-	
Tommy Stepl...	M.A. H. ...		
Milos Terzich	ACLI		
Georgia Massey	Inc. Division		

EXHIBIT "A"

Donald A. Molde, M.D.
Philip E. Carey, MSW
Jack F. Clarke, Ph.D.
100 W. GROVE, SUITE 250
RENO, NEVADA 89509

February 5, 1979

Mr. Rick Pugh, Executive Director
Nevada State Medical Association
3660 Baker Lane
Reno, Nevada 89509

Re: Assembly Bill #163

Dear Mr. Pugh:

At a recent meeting of the Nevada Psychiatric Association Assembly Bill #163 was discussed. Nevada psychiatrists have substantial reservations about the bill. As members of the Nevada State Medical Association, we would enlist your support to present brief testimony to the appropriate committee regarding this bill. The hearing is scheduled for February 8, 1979 at 3:00 p.m. The following would be the essence of our testimony.

The Nevada Psychiatric Association is in favor of better coverage for mental illness and other psychiatric problems through insurance coverage for Nevada citizens. We do not believe, however, that Assembly Bill #163 addresses that problem in a fair and responsible way. We would like to make the following points regarding this matter:

1. Psychologists are not physicians, have never attended medical school and have no medical training of any type. The inference which could be drawn from the Bill's language would seem to imply that in some areas psychologists can offer equivalent services to physicians. We do not believe this to be correct. We believe that psychologists should represent their own areas of special expertise to insurance companies and that arrangements for payment should be made on that basis, rather than on the basis of an implication that their services in some way resemble those of physicians.
2. We do not believe that it is in the best interest of the citizens of this State to pass legislation which allows very small special interest groups to have legislation passed which forces reimbursement procedures upon insurance companies. This is particularly true since the insurance policy represents a negotiated arrangement between the insurance company and individuals who chose to purchase the policy.

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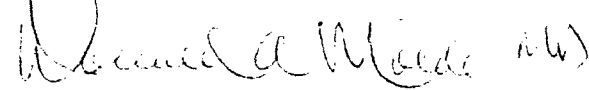
Re: Assembly Bill #163

(2. Con't) The purchaser of the policy should have the option of adding or subtracting coverage as he or she sees fit, depending on the nature of their circumstances. For this reason, we are opposed to the bill as it is currently written, although we would support such legislation, if the bill were changed in such a way to state that the option for better coverage of mental illness and other psychiatric problems would be presented to the purchaser of the policy for his consideration at the time of the premium negotiations.

3. We would also point out that no reference is made in Assembly Bill #163 to reimbursement for social workers, psychiatric nurses, marriage and family counselors, paraprofessionals of various types and all others who might regard themselves as providing services similiar to psychologists. Without those additions this bill would seem very narrow in its scope and would clearly appear to be a special interest type of legislation which removes options from the purchasers of the policy, which we believe they should be able to decide upon themselves.

We should point out, as well, that psychiatrists who are physicians are traditionally reimbursed much less than most other specialties of medicine through most insurance policies. According to the thinking of Assembly Bill #163, it would seem reasonable that Nevada psychiatrist would come to the legislature with a similiar bill requesting that any insurance company which reimburses any physician for any treatment would also have to reimburse psychiatrists for their treatment. Obviously we have not appeared for such a bill and will not because of the above mentioned reasons.

Sincerely,



Donald A. Molde, M.D.

DAM/jh

EXHIBIT "B"

1977

AMENDMENTS TO S.B. 448

Submitted by Milos Terzich representing Health Insurance Association of America.

Delete Lines 3 through 6 and insert in their place and stead as follows:

1. If any policy provides coverage for treatment of illness which is within the permitted scope of the practice of a qualified psychologist, the insured is entitled to [REDACTED] reimbursement.

~~_____~~

~~_____~~

2. As used in Subsection 1, a qualified psychologist means:

(a) A person who has been certified by this state as a psychologist;

(b) Has received a doctorate in psychology approved by the Board of Pshychological Examiners; and

(c) Has at least two years of clinical experience in an organized health setting.