

April 9, 2014

The Honorable Mike Kreidler, Commissioner
Washington Office of the Insurance Commissioner
PO Box 40255
Olympia, WA 98504-0255

Dear Commissioner Kreidler:

I am writing to you on behalf of the Washington Community Mental Health Council to express serious concerns about the draft network adequacy Washington Administrative Code rules issued March 19th. We are asking you to withdraw this draft and proceed with a more substantial stakeholder input process.

The draft rules would needlessly tighten and limit the definition of Essential Community Provider to those providers listed on the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Non-Exhaustive List of Essential Community Providers. That list specifies that it is non-exhaustive, but this rule would eliminate the flexibility that Washington needs as it configures its service delivery models and moves towards integration of physical and behavioral health care.

In addition, we are deeply concerned about the rules limitation on the OIC in terms of reviewing claimed “good faith efforts” to contract with Essential Community Providers. The OIC needs to look at all of the facts and circumstances to ensure that adequate access to services is available for all of Washington’s residents and this rule would restrict that review.

Finally, we object to the lack of specificity in standards for access to specialty services including psychiatry and emergency mental health crisis services. These services are essential and need to be delivered in a timely manner to preserve lives and mitigate suffering.

Please pull this draft and resume a robust stakeholder process with a chance for a much better result. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Ann E. Christian, CEO