

GOVERNOR'S VETO MESSAGE

March 29, 2024

To the Honorable Members of the Assembly:

I am vetoing **Assembly Bill 541** in its entirety.

This bill would allow out-of-state mental health care providers without a Wisconsin-issued license or credential to provide telehealth mental health care services to patients in Wisconsin, if the provider holds a license or approval from the state that the provider is physically present in when providing telehealth services and is not under investigation for unprofessional conduct.

I am vetoing this bill because I object to efforts that may result in Wisconsinites receiving lower quality of healthcare and provides fewer protections for Wisconsinites who may then receive poor treatment or experience unethical behavior from a healthcare provider. I appreciate the need for Wisconsin to retain, train, and recruit more qualified mental health providers across our state; however, achieving that goal through potentially sacrificing the quality of healthcare that Wisconsinites may receive—most especially for mental health services, which individuals may be seeking because they are experiencing a life-threatening mental health crisis—is untenable.

With limited exception, this bill prohibits requiring mental health care providers to be licensed, registered, certified, or approved to practice in Wisconsin in order to provide telehealth mental health services to patients located in Wisconsin if that provider meets certain conditions. Wisconsin is already part of interstate compact agreements that allow out-of-state providers to practice in our state for credentials such as psychologists and other mental health professionals. This bill creates an end run around the compact system, enabling providers who do not meet these existing standards or have the same experience as Wisconsin or compact state providers to provide mental health services through telehealth to people in our state.

Further, this bill leaves patients and consumers little recourse for complaints regarding poor treatment or unethical behavior. Credentialing examining boards in Wisconsin and the Department of Safety and Professional Services have no jurisdiction in other states, complaints filed on an out-of-state practitioner would not be able to be acted upon in Wisconsin, leaving patients and consumers fighting those matters across state lines.

I cannot support legislation that is likely to ultimately reduce healthcare quality and patient protections for Wisconsinites across our state.

Respectfully submitted,
TONY EVERS
Governor