



ZIA HEALING AND WELLNESS | 5353 N UNION BLVD SUITE 201A | COLORADO SPRINGS, CO 80918 | (719) 201-5602

9/9/2022

The Honorable Andres Pico
Representative, House District 16
200 E Colfax
Denver, CO 80203

Dear Representative Pico,

My name is Adrea Nicole Zaleski and I am a Licensed Professional Counselor Supervisor and owner of a new mental health counseling practice called Zia Healing and Wellness in Colorado Springs. Prior to becoming a proud mental health clinician and business owner, I honorably served our nation for over eight years in the United States Army. I have spent my entire life in a helping profession and I have been dedicated to serve others. I am grateful that I have obtained my education and can provide counseling services to assist others in the community. Additionally, I have recently become a Licensed Professional Counselor Clinical Supervisor in accordance with the rules and regulations through the Department of Regulatory Agency. The reason I am reaching out to you is because at this time I am requesting your assistance so that my small business can continue to serve others, mainly Medicaid clients.

My colleagues and I recently attended a meeting on 7 September 2022 in which Health Care Policy and Financing (HCPF) unveiled their new supervision policy presentation. In this meeting, they essentially let Colorado Licensed Professional Counselor Supervisors know that HCPF is going to tighten constraints so that it becomes more difficult for Licensed Professional Counselor Supervisors to do supervisory billing. Supervisory billing is important to our community and the counseling profession. In the profession of counseling after obtaining both your bachelor's degree (4 years) and clinical master's degree (2-3 years) you are not fully licensed. You then are supervised by a Licensed Professional Counselor for two additional years while you work to obtain 2000 hours of experience working with clients. After becoming fully licensed you have to wait to obtain 1000 more hours of experience as a licensed counselor to be eligible to obtain training a minimum of six hours to become a Clinical Supervisor. It is the duty and role of a clinical supervisor to then mentor interns and counselor candidates by providing ethical and professional assistance while they wait to obtain hours to become licensed. The system has been set up this way by the Department of Regulatory Agencies to ensure that our counselors are providing the best and safest care for our patients. It is a lengthy process but it is a fair process.

Previously, HCPF has allowed interns and counselor candidates to see clients under supervision for RAEs like CCHA, CO Access as long as they were under clinical supervision. This means there are more interns and counselor candidates in our state able to work with clients. As you know, following the pandemic there has been a mental health crisis. We need as many trained counseling professionals to be able to see patients. I am sure you already are aware that there are waiting lists that are very long and people are struggling to get the mental health care they need. I have been surprised to learn that instead of HCPF attempting to find ways to help obtain more qualified counselors, it seems as though every year they impose new rules and regulations that cause there to be less counselors that want to work with MEDICAID insurances.

As I stated previously in my letter, there was a meeting on 7 September that was held in which HCPF has decided they want to have a longer requirement for supervisory billing. Essentially, they do not want to follow the guidance as outlined by the Department of Regulatory Agencies for the 3000 total hours. They want clinical supervisors to wait two additional years post licensure before they allow supervisory billing (this would be essentially 4000 to 5000 clinical hours before a clinician can be a supervisor). They are stating this is in the interest of patient safety. When we tried to explain to HCPF that this would be detrimental to our profession and that it would cause limitations in service for our patients they turned off comments in the meeting. They did not want to hear our concerns. They simply had made a decision and did not want to change anything.

Counselors are advocating for themselves and most importantly their patients, by calling and email HCPF all week. Due to this movement HCPF has since decided that they will go ahead and hear us again in a few weeks at a meeting. Unfortunately, I do not believe that this is going to go in our counselors or patients favor. For the past 4 years that I have been a clinician in Colorado Springs I have watched HCPF cut our pay by 20% to save money one year, I have also watched them make decisions to limit the number of sessions our clients can have for their mental health (mid pandemic) and I have watched them hold pay from our counselors. I am worried, no terrified, that they will decide to implement this new rule and that small businesses like my veteran owned counseling practice will be shut down. I have exceeded DORAs requirements to become a clinical supervisor. I have over 3000 hours of direct client hours. I have taken a 45 hour course to become a clinical supervisor, which far exceeds the 6 hour requirement. I have also taken additional supervision courses including; Clinical Supervision for Marriage Couples and Family Counselors, Clinical Supervision for Addictions Counselors, Motivational Interviewing for Clinical Supervisors and I was planning to take Jungian Analysis in Clinical Supervision at the end of the month. Now HCPF is saying that Clinical Supervisors like myself are not experienced enough to supervise interns and counselors? I have demonstrated my ability to do so for the past 8 months, yet they have decided I do not have enough experience and need to wait until next year, when I am 2 years post licensure. If this is approved, this will mean that the 131 CCHA patients that my staff of four currently assists will need to be discharged. They will not be able to be seen at our clinic and will be waitlisted to find a clinic that can assist them. A lot of our patients have mental health concerns and addiction concerns. They are making good progress with their assigned clinician. If their services are pulled it can have detrimental effects on them. Unfortunately in this profession, it can have grave consequences.

I am writing this letter to advocate right now for my patients and my small veteran owned business Zia Healing and Wellness. I can assure you that I am not the only small business that will be impacted. I have colleagues in the community that will be facing the same hardship. They will be forced to discharge



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Medicaid clients by the hundreds. Overall thousands of patients will go without services if this is implemented. I am asking you to please help stop HCPF before this happens. We do not want Medicaid clients to go without mental health care. Please urge HCPF to stand down with their new proposed supervisory restrictions. Our patients need to be able to continue to have mental health care. I appreciate your assistance and urgency in this matter. If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out. I look forward to all of the assistance you can provide in this matter.

Very Respectfully,

Adrea Nicole Zaleski

MS, LPC-S, MFTC, NCC

Clinical Supervisor and Owner of Zia Healing and Wellness