



State of West Virginia
Joe Manchin III
Governor

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May 7, 2009

VIA HAND DELIVERY

The Honorable Earl Ray Tomblin
President, Senate of West Virginia
State Capitol
Charleston, West Virginia 25305

Dear President Tomblin:

Pursuant to the provisions of Section Fourteen, Article VII of the Constitution of West Virginia, I hereby disapprove and return Enrolled Committee Substitute for Senate Bill No. 672.

Enrolled Committee Substitute for Senate Bill No. 672 would require the payment of increased Medicaid reimbursement rates to providers of behavioral health care services. Principally, the Bill is intended to increase funding for behavioral health and rehabilitation services provided by thirteen community-based comprehensive behavioral health centers. If approved, the Bill would codify reimbursement rate increases for thirty-two specific Medicaid service codes. After many thoughtful hours of deliberation and meetings with groups concerned about behavioral health care, I have decided to veto the Bill because it sets a precarious legal precedent for Medicaid and does not fairly address the need for additional resources throughout the entire behavioral health care system.

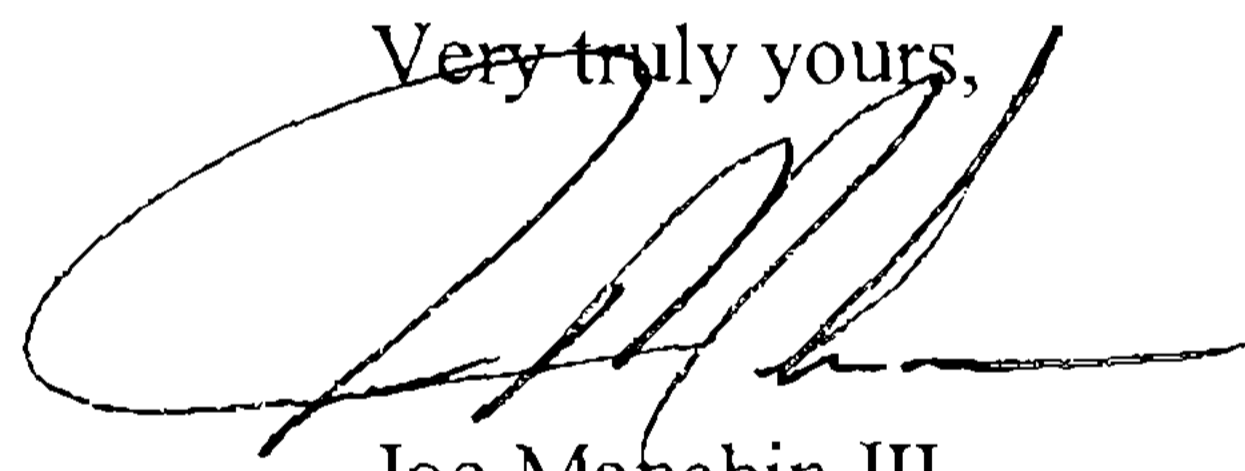
I agree that more public resources should be committed to behavioral health care in West Virginia. Enrolled Committee Substitute for Senate Bill No. 687, which I will approve with my signature today, reestablishes the Comprehensive Behavioral Health Commission, a body charged with finding solutions to problems within West Virginia's behavioral health care system. I have asked the Commission to provide immediate recommendations for increases in behavioral health care spending, including recommendations for effective Medicaid reimbursement rate increases.

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To pay for increases the Commission recommends, I have proposed to the Legislature a commitment of \$12,000,000 in new state and federal dollars for behavioral health care. These additional funds will be utilized throughout the entire behavioral health care system to provide help to people who are truly in need of critical services, including community-based services.

I commend the Legislature for working to improve our behavioral health care system, and I thank the supporters of Enrolled Committee Substitute for Senate Bill No. 672 for bringing the emergent needs of the behavioral health care community to the forefront. I am committed to improving behavioral health care, expanding community-based services and alleviating pressures on our State hospitals and jails, and I truly believe that additional funding and the continuation of the Comprehensive Behavioral Health Commission are significant steps toward achieving those goals. However, for all of the reasons above, I must veto Enrolled Committee Substitute for Senate Bill No. 672.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joe Manchin III", with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Joe Manchin III
Governor

cc: The Honorable Richard Thompson
Speaker, House of Delegates
The Honorable Natalie E. Tennant
Secretary of State