

CHAPTER 59**(SJR 72)**

A JOINT RESOLUTION directing the Cabinet for Health and Family Services to apply for a Medicaid waiver for individuals with severe mental illness and declaring an emergency.

WHEREAS, approximately 746,000 adults in Kentucky have a mental health condition and approximately 113,000 individuals have a severe mental illness (SMI); and

WHEREAS, individuals with SMI are the only population in Kentucky with a disability that does not have a Medicaid waiver; and

WHEREAS, housing is central to recovery for individuals with SMI, but individuals with SMI experience higher rates of housing insecurity and homelessness than the general population; and

WHEREAS, without suitable housing, individuals with SMI have little chance of maintaining other resources in their lives, such as supportive social relationships, employment, and meaningful activities; and

WHEREAS, temporary housing for individuals with SMI who are discharged from a hospital and need a safe place to stay for follow-up appointments while a more permanent plan is processing is also important; and

WHEREAS, employment rates decline with increasing mental illness severity, and individuals with SMI are less likely than individuals with no, mild, or moderate mental illness to be employed after age 49; and

WHEREAS, supported employment helps individuals with mental illness obtain and keep competitive employment; and

WHEREAS, there is evidence to conclude that supported employment significantly increases levels of employment over the long term; and

WHEREAS, a Medicaid waiver will allow housing services and supported employment to be reimbursable by Medicaid, thereby improving access to recovery for individuals with SMI;

NOW, THEREFORE,

Be it resolved by the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky:

➔Section 1. The General Assembly hereby directs the Cabinet for Health and Family Services to apply for a Medicaid waiver for individuals with severe mental illness to provide for:

(1) Supported housing, which may include staffed residences, group homes, family care homes, specialized personal care homes, or personal care homes;

(2) Medical respite care; and

(3) Supported employment.

➔Section 2. The Cabinet for Health and Family Services shall report to the Interim Joint Committee on Health, Welfare, and Family Services by August 1, 2022, of any actions taken and any necessary legislative action that may be needed to obtain a Medicaid waiver targeting individuals with severe mental illness.

➔Section 3. Whereas, the General Assembly desires to provide individuals with SMI with supported housing and employment, an emergency is declared to exist, and this Resolution takes effect upon its passage and approval by the Governor or upon its otherwise becoming law.

Signed by Governor March 30, 2022.