



Illinois Department of Insurance

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 1, 2024

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IDOI Kicks Off its Second Annual Mental Health Parity Ad Campaign for Mental Health Awareness Month

The campaign introduces a new animated character to get the message out about parity laws

Chicago - The Illinois Department of Insurance (IDOI) announced today that its second annual mental health parity ad campaign will again kick off during Mental Health Awareness Month. The radio, digital, and social media ads will run in several markets, including Chicago, Springfield, Rockford, and Peoria to raise awareness about mental health parity.

This year, the consumer education campaign introduces a new animated character named Yarney to help consumers better understand their rights related to health insurance coverage for mental health and substance use disorders, under the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act (MHPAEA).

“It’s important that Illinoisans know about the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act which has protections to ensure that insurance coverage for mental health and substance use disorders is no more restrictive than coverage for physical health conditions,” **said IDOI Acting Director Ann Gillespie**. “For instance, if your health plan provides unlimited doctor visits for a chronic condition like hypertension, then it must offer unlimited visits for a mental health condition such as depression.”

Gillespie said the Department has new mental health parity resources available to consumers, “In addition to our ad campaign, we now have educational videos on our [Get Covered Illinois website](#) which also feature Yarney to explain mental health parity in more detail and remind consumers that we will enforce parity laws to help protect them.”

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The Department's enforcement includes conducting market conduct examinations to investigate the practices of health insurance companies, and when parity law violations are found, companies are fined. Mental health parity fines are earmarked for the Parity Advancement Fund which to date has a balance of more than \$4.4 million. The fund is appropriated by the General Assembly to help further the cause of mental health parity, including parity compliance advocacy, initiatives supporting parity implementation and enforcement on behalf of consumers, and a Consumer Education Campaign.

IDOL's mental health parity ad campaign will run through September. The website page and educational videos about mental health parity direct consumers to [file a complaint](#) with the Department if they believe their health insurer's mental health and substance use disorder coverage has more restrictive requirements than those for physical health coverage.

You can learn more [Mental Health Parity](#) and view the Department's new educational videos, at [Getcoveredillinois.gov](#).

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