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Public Policy Memo

The Evergreen State College

***“The Need for Improved Access to Mental Health Services”***

**Introduction:**

As someone who has personal experiences with chronic mental health conditions, I am acutely aware of the significant public problem related to the lack of access to affordable and quality mental health services. The need for mental health services has never been greater, and yet, many people in our society continue to struggle to access and afford the necessary mental health care.

**Background:**

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, 1 in 5 adults in the United States experiences some form of mental illness in any given year. It is also estimated that nearly 1 in 25 people are living with a serious mental illness. Despite the prevalence, access to mental health services continues to remain a challenge for many people, particularly those from low-income backgrounds. Those living in states with public policy that is hostile towards public health insurance (Medicaid) or federal health insurance (Medicare) experience significant hurdles as

well in finding and securing appropriate mental health services, lack of funding for mental health services is often more blatant and dramatic in states with these policies as well.

**Policy Position:**

In order to address this public problem, it is critical that policymakers prioritize the need to improve access to mental health services. I advocate for increased funding for mental health programs, initiatives that promote awareness and education about mental health, and increased coverage for mental health services under existing health insurance policies.

**Impact:**

By creating a policy that supports greater access to mental health services, individuals who are struggling with mental health conditions will have the opportunity to access treatment and support. Such treatment and support can have a positive impact on personal, societal, and economic levels, including improved productivity, reduced healthcare expenses, and increased quality of life.

**Conclusion:**

Improving access to mental health services is a crucial public policy concern that requires immediate attention. I urge policymakers to prioritize this issue so that individuals with mental health conditions can receive the treatment and support they need to recover and thrive in our communities. Thank you for considering my support of this critical policy initiative.

Sincerely,

Corbin Coffman

References:

National Institute of Mental Health. (n.d.). Mental Illness.  
<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/mental-illness.shtml>.