



**University of New Mexico Staff Council 2023 Resolution #1**

**Name:** Resolution to Reduce or Eliminate Cost Sharing for Behavioral Health Services

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**Adopted by Staff Council:** February 21, 2023

1. Whereas, According to the World Health Organization (WHO) there have been significant effects on mental health due to the COVID-19 pandemic<sup>i</sup>; and
2. Whereas, the WHO further reports that the COVID-19 pandemic has triggered an increase in depression and anxiety of 25% worldwide<sup>ii</sup>; and
3. Whereas, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends that employers increase support for workers mental health<sup>iii</sup>; and
4. Whereas, the Household Pulse Survey results published by the CDC estimates 32.3% of Americans have symptoms of Anxiety Disorder or Depressive Disorder for the period of January 4-16, 2023<sup>iv</sup>; and
5. Whereas, 21% of adults in the United States live with some type of mental illness<sup>v</sup>; and
6. Whereas, Black, Indigenous, People of Color, and LGBTQIA+ groups suffer mental health issues at higher rates<sup>v</sup>; and
7. Whereas, 84% of employers report plans to increase mental health benefits for employees in 2023<sup>vi</sup>; and
8. Whereas, recent compensation increases have been outpaced by inflation, leading to flat or decreased disposable income; and
9. Whereas, due to the shortage of Tier 1 mental health providers, University of New Mexico (UNM) employees must obtain mental health services from higher cost Tier 2 or out of network providers; and
10. Whereas, Senate Bill 317 eliminated cost sharing for behavioral health services for most insurance plans in the State of New Mexico<sup>vii</sup>; and
11. Whereas, making behavioral health care access more affordable for staff would support UNM 2040 goals Three and Four<sup>viii</sup>; and

12. Whereas, the staff of the University of New Mexico play an essential role in supporting the academic and personal growth of students, and often face high levels of stress and burnout in their work; and
13. Whereas, mental health is a critical component of overall wellbeing, and access to mental health resources is essential for promoting the health and productivity of staff; and
14. Whereas, copay costs for mental health services can act as a significant barrier to accessing these resources, particularly for those with lower incomes or fewer resources; and
15. Whereas, reducing or eliminating copay costs for mental health services would improve access to care and reduce the financial burden on staff seeking mental health services; and
16. Whereas, numerous studies have shown that investing in mental health resources can have significant positive impacts on both individual and organizational outcomes; (i, ii, iii, iv, v,vi, vii, viii)
17. Resolved, That Staff Council requests that UNM significantly reduce or eliminate cost sharing for behavioral health services; and
18. Resolved, that Staff Council strongly advocates for the reduction or elimination of copay costs for mental health services, including counseling and other forms of mental health support, to be made available at no cost to all staff members; and
19. Resolved, that the University of New Mexico administration be urged to allocate the necessary funds and resources to ensure the sustainability of these services; and
20. Resolved, that the University of New Mexico take steps to raise awareness and promote the availability of mental health resources for staff, including providing information on how to access these resources and promoting the importance of prioritizing mental health; and
21. Resolved, that a task force or committee be formed to oversee the implementation of these changes and monitor their effectiveness in promoting the mental health and wellbeing of staff.

Copies of this Resolution shall be sent to the UNM Board of Regents; UNM President Dr. Garnett Stokes; Executive Vice President for Finance and Administration Teresa Costantinidis; Associate Vice Presidents for Human Resources Kathy Agnew and Kevin Stevenson; Provost and Executive Vice President of Academic Affairs Dr. James Holloway; Executive Vice President for HSC and CEO of the UNM Health System Dr. Douglas Ziedonis; and Vice President for Equity and Inclusion Dr. Assata Zerai.

#### References

<sup>i</sup> <https://www.who.int/news-room/feature-stories/detail/the-impact-of-covid-19-on-mental-health-cannot-be-made-light-of#:~:text=A%20great%20number%20of%20people,affected%20much%20more%20than%20others>

ii <https://www.who.int/news/item/02-03-2022-covid-19-pandemic-triggers-25-increase-in-prevalence-of-anxiety-and-depression-worldwide>

iii <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/twh/newsletter/twhnewsv11n1.html>

iv <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/covid19/pulse/mental-health.htm>

v <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/report/2020-nsduh-annual-national-report>

vi <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesbusinesscouncil/2023/01/23/how-employee-wellness-benefits-can-help-save-money-during-economic-uncertainty/?sh=3a47f56e434c>

vii <https://www.nmlegis.gov/Sessions/21%20Regular/bills/senate/SB0317.pdf>

viii <https://opportunity.unm.edu/>