

Vukmir Repeatedly Opposed Expanding Mental Health Care Coverage

Written by Democratic Party of Wisconsin, Brad Bainum

Friday, 05 October 2018 09:20 - Last Updated Friday, 05 October 2018 09:43



A new [DPW research report](#) explores how Leah Vukmir has, time and time again, sided with insurance companies over Wisconsinites in need of mental health and substance abuse treatment coverage.

MADISON - This week, the Democratic Party of Wisconsin is continuing to highlight Republican U.S. Senate candidate Leah Vukmir's [track record of siding with insurance companies over Wisconsinites](#), Monday releasing [a new research report](#) that exposes Vukmir's history of repeatedly opposing requiring insurance companies to expand coverage for mental health care and substance abuse treatments.

During her time in Wisconsin's state legislature, Leah Vukmir has repeatedly blocked and voted against legislation that required insurance companies to expand coverage for Wisconsinites' mental health and substance abuse treatments, siding with insurance and business advocacy groups over Wisconsinites in need of health care coverage:

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Vukmir sided with insurance companies against expanding mental health coverage for prescription drugs and diagnostic testing -- Leah Vukmir was [one of just ten representatives](#) to oppose 2004 Senate Bill 71, mental health parity legislation that expanded coverage by prohibiting insurance companies from including prescription drug and diagnostic testing in coverage limits.

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The bill was supported by Republicans and Democrats, in both chambers, and [endorsed by a wide range of health care, mental health, disability rights, and advocacy groups](#)

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that supported the bill and lobbied for its passage.

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In opposing the bill, [Vukmir aligned herself with powerful insurance companies](#) and business advocacy groups.

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Vukmir blocked three bills that would have expanded mental health coverage -- During the 2007-2008 biennial, Leah Vukmir, as chair of the Assembly Committee on Health and Healthcare Reform, blocked at least three mental health and substance abuse coverage expansion bills to die in her committee, refusing to even hold a public hearing for two of the three measures.

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2007 Assembly Bill 463 -- As committee chair, Vukmir [refused to hold a vote on 2007 Assembly Bill 463](#), blocking the measure that would have required health insurance companies to expand coverage to include a broader range of treatments for "[outpatient treatment of nervous and mental disorders and alcoholism and other drug abuse problems](#)".

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2007 Senate Bill 246 -- As committee chair, Vukmir [refused to hold a public hearing or vote on 2007 Senate Bill 246](#), blocking the bipartisan, Senate-passed measure that would have broadened requirements that insurance companies offer coverage for "[the services of clinical social workers, marriage and family therapists, and professional counselors for the outpatient treatment of nervous and mental disorders and alcoholism and other drug abuse problem](#)".

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2007 Assembly Bill 922 -- As committee chair, Vukmir [refused to hold a public hearing or vote](#)

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[on 2007 Assembly Bill 922,](#)

blocking

the measure that would have expanded coverage requirements for "

[at least one annual physical examination to cover at least one annual screening for a covered individual to determine the need for treatment of mental health and substance abuse problems and for a female covered under the plan at least one screening during a pregnancy for prepartum depression](#)

."

- Vukmir fought and voted against a bill to require that insurance companies cover treatments for mental health and substance abuse as they would cover treatments for other conditions -- During the 2009-2010 biennial, Leah Vukmir [voted against 2009](#)

[Senate Bill 362](#)

, a

bipartisan measure to require that insurance companies cover mental health and substance abuse treatments as comprehensively as they would treatments for other conditions.

- The bill was supported by Republicans and Democrats, [as well as by medical professionals and disability rights advocates](#)

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In opposing the measure, Vukmir aligned herself with business advocacy groups that lobbied against the bill, [arguing](#) that a coverage expansion was too expensive.

As with Leah Vukmir's [votes against requiring insurance companies to expand coverage for sick Wisconsinites' oral chemotherapy](#) and [hearing-impaired kids' cochlear implants](#)

, Vukmir

has routinely opposed expanding coverage for mental health and substance abuse treatments, siding with powerful insurance companies over people.

Similarly, Vukmir is campaigning on repealing the Affordable Care Act and gutting its protections for Americans with pre-existing conditions and returning to the days when insurance companies could write their own rules, despite the fact that 2.4 million Wisconsinites have pre-existing conditions.

Read the full research report on Leah Vukmir's opposition to expanding mental health care and substance abuse coverage [here](#).