Senate Bill XXX

By: Senators \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

A BILL TO BE ENACTED

AN ACT

To amend Chapter 24 of Title 33 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to insurance generally, so as to provide that the Office of Insurance and Safety Fire Commissioner shall implement MHPAEA; to provide that the Office of Insurance and Safety Fire Commissioner shall report about MHPAEA implementation; to provide updated definitions; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

**Section 1**

Chapter 24 of Title 33 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to insurance coverage for mental illness, is amended as follows:

“33-24-29.1

(a) As used in this Code section, the term:

(1) "Accident and sickness insurance benefit plan, policy, or contract" means:

(A) A group or blanket accident and sickness insurance policy or contract, as defined in Chapter 30 of this title;

(B) A group contract of the type issued by a health care plan established under Chapter 20 of this title;

(C) A group contract of the type issued by a health maintenance organization established under Chapter 21 of this title; or

(D) Any similar group accident and sickness benefit plan, policy, or contract.

(2) "Mental disorder" shall have the same meaning as defined by the most recent version of The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (American Psychiatric Association) or The International Classification of Diseases (World Health Organization) ~~as of January 1, 1981~~, or as the Commissioner may further define such term by rule and regulation.

(b) This Code section shall apply only to accident and sickness insurance benefit plans, policies, or contracts, certificates evidencing coverage under a policy of insurance, or any other evidence of insurance issued by an insurer, delivered, or issued for delivery in this state, except for policies issued to an employer in another state which provide coverage for employees in this state who are employed by such employer policyholder, providing major medical benefits covering all groups ~~except small groups as defined in subsection (a) of Code Section 33-30-12~~.

(c) Every insurer authorized to issue accident and sickness insurance benefit plans, policies, or contracts shall be required to make available, either as a part of or as an optional endorsement to all such policies providing major medical insurance coverage which are issued, delivered, issued for delivery, or renewed on or after July 1, 1998, coverage for the treatment of mental disorders, which coverage shall be at least as extensive and provide at least the same degree of coverage and the same annual and lifetime dollar limits as that provided by the respective plan, policy, or contract for the treatment of other types of physical illnesses. Such an optional endorsement shall also provide that the coverage required to be made available pursuant to this Code section shall also cover the spouse and the dependents of the insured if the insured's spouse and dependents are covered under such benefit plan, policy, or contract. Every insurer that issues accident and sickness insurance benefits plans, policies, or contracts that provide coverage for the treatment of mental disorders shall provide such coverage in accordance with the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008 found at 42 U.S.C. 300gg-26 and its implementing and related regulations found at 45 CFR 146.136, 45 CFR 147.160, and 45 CFR 156.115(a)(3).

(d)

(1) The optional endorsement required to be made available under subsection (c) of this Code section shall not contain any exclusions, reductions, or other limitations as to coverages, including without limitation limits on the number of inpatient treatment days and outpatient treatment visits, which apply to the treatment of mental disorders unless such provisions apply generally to other similar benefits provided or paid for under the accident and sickness insurance benefit plan, policy, or contract, except as otherwise provided in paragraph (2) of this subsection.

(2) The optional endorsement required to be made available under subsection (c) of this Code section may contain deductibles or coinsurance provisions which apply to the treatment of mental disorders~~, and such deductibles or coinsurance provisions need not apply generally to other similar benefits provided or paid for under the accident and sickness insurance benefit plan, policy, or contract; provided, however, that if a separate deductible applies to the treatment of mental disorders, it shall not exceed the deductible for medical or surgical coverages. A separate out-of-pocket limit may be applied to the treatment of mental disorders, which limit, in the case of an indemnity type plan, shall not exceed the maximum out-of-pocket limit for medical or surgical coverages and which, in the case of a health maintenance organization plan, shall not exceed the maximum out-of-pocket limit for medical or surgical coverages or the amount of $2,000.00 in 1998 and as annually adjusted thereafter according to the Consumer Price Index for health care, whichever is greater~~.

(e)

(1) Nothing in this Code section shall be construed to prohibit an insurer, nonprofit corporation, health care plan, health maintenance organization, or other person issuing any similar accident and sickness insurance benefit plan, policy, or contract from issuing or continuing to issue an accident and sickness insurance benefit plan, policy, or contract which provides benefits greater than the minimum benefits required to be made available under this Code section or from issuing any such plans, policies, or contracts which provide benefits which are generally more favorable to the insured than those required to be made available under this Code section.

(2) Nothing in this Code section shall be construed to prohibit any person issuing an accident and sickness insurance benefit plan, policy, or contract from providing the coverage required to be made available under subsection (c) of this Code section through an indemnity plan with or without designating preferred providers of services or from arranging for or providing services instead of indemnifying against the cost of such services, without regard to whether such method of providing coverage for treatment of mental disorders applies generally to other similar benefits provided or paid for under the accident and sickness insurance benefit plan, policy, or contract.

(f) The requirements of this Code section with respect to a group or blanket accident and sickness insurance benefit plan, policy, or contract shall be satisfied if the coverage specified in subsections (c) and (d) of this Code section is made available to the master policyholder of such plan, policy, or contract. Nothing in this Code section shall be construed to require the group insurer, nonprofit corporation, health care plan, health maintenance organization, or master policyholder to provide or make available such coverage to any insured under such group or blanket plan, policy, or contract.

(g) All insurers that issue group accident and sickness insurance benefits plans, policies, or contracts that provide coverage for the treatment of mental disorders shall submit an annual report to the Commissioner on or before January 1, 2020 that contains the following information:

(1) A description of the process used to develop or select the medical necessity criteria for mental disorder benefits and the process used to develop or select the medical necessity criteria for medical and surgical benefits.

(2) Identification of all non-quantitative treatment limitations (NQTLs) that are applied to both mental disorder benefits and medical and surgical benefits within each classification of benefits; there may be no separate NQTLs that apply to mental disorder benefits but do not apply to medical and surgical benefits within any classification of benefits.

(3) The results of an analysis that demonstrates that for the medical necessity criteria described in item (1) and for each NQTL identified in item (2), as written and in operation, the processes, strategies, evidentiary standards, or other factors used in applying the medical necessity criteria and each NQTL to mental disorder benefits within each classification of benefits are comparable to, and are applied no more stringently than, the processes, strategies, evidentiary standards, or other factors used in applying the medical necessity criteria and each NQTL to medical and surgical benefits within the corresponding classification of benefits; at a minimum, the results of the analysis shall:

(A) Identify the factors used to determine that an NQTL will apply to a benefit, including factors that were considered but rejected

(B) Identify and define the specific evidentiary standards used to define the factors and any other evidence relied upon in designing each NQTL

(C) Provide the comparative analyses, including the results of the analyses, performed to determine that the processes and strategies used to design each NQTL, as written, and the as written processes and strategies used to apply the NQTL to mental disorder benefits are comparable to, and are applied no more stringently than, the processes and strategies used to design each NQTL, as written, and the as written processes and strategies used to apply the NQTL to medical and surgical benefits

(D) Provide the comparative analyses, including the results of the analyses, performed to determine that the processes and strategies used to apply each NQTL, in operation, for mental disorder benefits are comparable to, and applied no more stringently than, the processes or strategies used to apply each NQTL, in operation, for medical and surgical benefits

(E) Disclose the specific findings and conclusions reached by the insurer that the results of the analyses above indicate that the insurer is in compliance with this section and the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008 and its implementing regulations and related regulations, which includes 45 CFR 146.136, 45 CFR 147.160, and 45 CFR 156.115(a)(3).

(h) The Commissioner shall implement and enforce applicable provisions of the Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008, and any amendments to, and any federal guidance or regulations relevant to, that act, including 45 CFR 146.136, 45 CFR 147.136, 45 CFR 147.160, and 45 CFR 156.115(a)(3), which includes:

(1) Proactively ensuring compliance by insurers that issue individual and group accident and sickness insurance benefits plans, policies, or contracts that provide coverage for the treatment of mental disorders.

(2) Evaluating all consumer or provider complaints regarding mental disorder coverage for possible parity violations.

(3) Performing parity compliance market conduct examinations of insurers that issue individual and group accident and sickness insurance benefits plans, policies, or contracts that provide coverage for the treatment of mental disorders, particularly market conduct examinations that focus on nonquantitative treatment limitations such as prior authorization, concurrent review, retrospective review, step-therapy, network admission standards, reimbursement rates, and geographic restrictions, among other nonquantitative treatment limitations.

(4) Requesting that insurers that issue individual and group accident and sickness insurance benefits plans, policies, or contracts that provide coverage for the treatment of mental disorders submit comparative analyses during the form review process demonstrating how they design and apply nonquantitative treatment limitations, both as written and in operation, for mental disorder benefits as compared to how they design and apply nonquantitative treatment limitations, as written and in operation, for medical and surgical benefits.

(5) The Commissioner may adopt rules, under Code Section 33-2-9, as may be necessary to effectuate any provisions of the Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008 that relate to the business of insurance.

(i) Not later than March 1, 2020, the Commissioner shall issue a report and an educational presentation to the General Assembly; such report and presentation shall:

(1) Cover the methodology the Commissioner is using to check for compliance with the federal Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008 (MHPAEA), and any federal regulations or guidance relating to the compliance and oversight of MHPAEA.

(2) Identify market conduct examinations conducted or completed during the preceding 12-month period regarding compliance with parity in mental disorder benefits under state and federal laws and summarize the results of such market conduct examinations.

(3) Detail any educational or corrective actions the Commissioner has taken to ensure insurer compliance with MHPAEA and this section.

(4) The report must be written in non-technical, readily understandable language and shall be made available to the public by, among such other means as the Commissioner finds appropriate, posting the report on the website of the Insurance and Safety Fire Commissioner.

**Section 3**

All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.