



**CHESTNUT RIDGE**  
COUNSELING SERVICES, INC.

[www.crcsi.org](http://www.crcsi.org)

100 New Salem Road, Suite 116  
Uniontown, PA 15401-8904

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**Main Phone: 724 437-0729    Fax: 724 437-6415    Crisis Services: 724 437-1003**

Thank you to all the honorable members of the Senate Consumer Protection and Professional License Committee for the opportunity to provide testimony today.

I concur with my remarkable panelists. Since I was “tardy” in submitting my testimony, I was able to review their analysis and finalized my testimony.

My approach will be a bit more from a direct “boots on the ground” community impact of delays in approving professional licensing.

Let me set the stage, while the COVID pandemic has been mitigated, the next public health pandemic is upon us. The impact of COVID on the mental health of all, especially children, will resonate for years to come.

- \* Children & Adolescents Emergency Department visits are up to 25%
- \* Suicides is the 3<sup>rd</sup> leading cause of death in adolescents ages 15-19.
- \* Even before the pandemic 22 military service veterans committed suicide every day.
- \* 988 calls & crisis intervention services have exponentially increased.

I share these statistics to illustrate that anything we can do to improve the identification of those in need of treatment and increase access to mental health treatment and support is essential.

In Pennsylvania 20% of our school students have considered suicide & nearly 40% feel depressed on most days.

These are statistics from the 2021 Pennsylvania Youth Survey conducted each year by the PA Commission on Crime & Delinquency, PA Department of Drug & Alcohol Programs and PA Department of Education.

Chestnut Ridge Counseling Services is the primary provider of public & private mental health treatment in Fayette County. Our Outpatient therapy, psychiatric medical services and school district-based therapy and support services impact over 10,000 Fayette and surrounding county residents each year. In Fayette County that equates to one out of 13 residents.

The deployment of psychiatrists, social workers, professional counselors, nurse practitioners, physician assistants and psychologists are the first line of defense in the prevention of a full blown public mental health crisis.

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The Pennsylvania Public Mental Health System has been under resourced for decades and now faces an epic struggle to recruit and retain licensed professionals at all levels.

While we have lost one established CRNP, Chestnut Ridge Counseling Services as a CRNP Psychiatric certification preceptor sight, recently retained three full-time recent CRNP students as full-time employees. Unfortunately, the license approval process is averaging 3-5 months.

In addition, the approval of the CRNP Prescription Authority agreement with their supervising Physician, may take another two months.

Each of our current Certified Nurse Practitioners see 600 new patients each year. That is 50 new patients every month. In addition, each of the Nurse Practitioners performs over 3,000 treatment visits per year.

At Chestnut Ridge Counseling Service alone a 4–5-month process to approve our three CRNP licenses equates to 750 individuals in need of initial psychiatric care and mental health treatment will not be treated.

1. Recommendations

1. Expedite the license approval process: 45 days or less.

2. Continue to facilitate licensed: Psychiatrist, Physicians Assistants, Nurse Practitioners and other licensed Social Workers and Professional Counselors to join multiple state license compacts.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mike Quinn

Chief Executive Officer

Chestnut Ridge Counseling Services, Inc.

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