

WisDems: Mental health care advocates criticize Leah Vukmir's opposition to coverage expansions

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“As a nurse, I find it shameful that Leah Vukmir would oppose efforts to help patients struggling with mental health issues with their illness, with their addictions” -Nurse and former state Rep. Sandy Pasch

MADISON — Today, Wisconsin mental health care advocates [held a media call](#) to highlight [a new Democratic Party of Wisconsin report](#) on Republican U.S. Senate candidate Leah Vukmir's record of blocking and voting against expanded coverage for mental health care and substance abuse treatments.

During the call, nurse and former state Rep. Sandy Pasch and mental health care advocate Mike Bacchuber, of Madison, zeroed in on Leah Vukmir's [long track record of unapologetically siding with powerful insurance companies](#) over Wisconsinites in need of health care coverage. During her U.S. Senate run, Vukmir has defended past [votes against coverage for oral chemotherapy](#) as well as [kids' hearing aids and cochlear implants](#), and Vukmir has made gutting the Affordable Care Act's protections for Wisconsinites with pre-existing conditions a centerpiece of her candidacy.

Key quotes:

“As a nurse, I find it shameful that Leah Vukmir would oppose efforts to help patients struggling with mental health issues with their illness, with their addictions

— especially given that she’s a nurse herself, and she likes to pull that card out, that she’s a nurse and she understands health care. But she doesn’t follow research, she doesn’t follow information-based decision-making, and she did oppose these efforts to help patients struggling with addictions, because she didn’t want to require her powerful allies in the insurance industry to cover expanded treatments for Wisconsinites in need.” —Nurse and former state Rep. Sandy Pasch

“Leah Vukmir’s record of blocking and voting against expanded coverage for Wisconsinites in need of mental health care and substance abuse treatments just isn’t looking out for our state. It’s putting powerful corporate interests over everyday Wisconsinites. And frankly, it plays into the deeply toxic idea that mental illness or addiction are less important than other conditions. That is just plain wrong.” —Wisconsin mental health advocate Mike Bacchuber

Listen to the full call audio [here](#).