Pennsylvania Representative Dan Miller hosted his seventh annual Disability and Mental Health Summit in Pittsburgh at the beginning of March. The event highlights a variety of critical issues faced by people with disabilities. Over 2,000 legislators, advocates, youth, and practitioners were in attendance.

The all-day event covered a variety of topics including sessions on Building a Youth Mental Health Advocacy Network, Navigating Medicaid for a Child with a Disability, and From Referral to Job Placement: Led by the Pennsylvania Office of Vocational Rehabilitation.

Numerous high schools participated in the “Advocacy in Action” session in which transition-aged students learned how to navigate disability support services through self-advocacy. During this session, students had the opportunity to meet in small groups with state legislators to share their concerns and dreams. Students advocated for more apprenticeship and internship opportunities as well as money management and transportation trainings. Additionally, students expressed their interests in becoming chefs, artists, and working with pets and children.

Twenty-one legislators from both sides of the aisle joined together for the legislative panel discussion where they shared state initiatives to increase disability employment and mental health services in the state. These discussions included initiatives such as state as a model employer and mental health parity.

The conference prioritized five republican sponsored bills and five democratic sponsored bills that focused on disability and mental health issues at the Legislative Action Center during the conference. Over 100 advocates helped pick the ten bills demonstrated. Attendees were able to learn more about the bills, ask questions, and sign for their support. These bills include:

- **SB 890/HB 2202:** Medical Assistance for Workers with Disabilities
- **HB 1548:** Excepted Services Hiring & Promotion Authority for Individuals with Disabilities Act
- **SB 914:** Adult Changing Stations
- **SB 437:** Mental Health Bed Registry
- **HB 1500:** Increasing Access to School Counselors, Psychologists, Social Workers, and Nurses
- **HB 432:** Post-Traumatic Stress Injury & Workers Compensation
- **HB 1696:** Mental Health Parity & Addiction Equity
- **HB 2188:** Deafblind Support Service Providers
- **HB 1739/SB 580:** The Family Care Act
- **HB 590:** Including Mental Health, Physical & Developmental Disabilities Education in health classes

Representative Miller emphasized, “The Americans with Disabilities Act was passed by a Democratic
congress and Republican president. Progress on these issues will only be made together!”

By:
Monday, April 13, 2020 at 02:44 PM
Tags: