

Mental Health Liaison Group

December 10, 2007

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
H-232 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Harry Reid
Senate Majority Leader
S-221 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Madam Speaker and Leader Reid:

The undersigned organizations are writing to urge you to give the highest priority to passing a strong mental health and addiction parity law this year.

Millions of Americans with or at risk of mental health or substance use disorders continue to experience health insurance discrimination because federal law still allows arbitrary barriers on coverage of needed services. Despite widespread support, legislation that would close the loopholes in the existing partial parity law by outlawing arbitrary benefit limits has been blocked in every Congress since 1999. As every year more than 31,000 Americans die by suicide and an estimated 1.4 million individuals attempt suicide, passing parity is a matter of life and death.

Finally, the parity logjam was broken in September by unanimous Senate passage of S. 558, a landmark bill supported by hundreds of health, social welfare and consumer organizations as well as by former parity opponents in the employer and insurer community. Broad support for parity legislation in the House has led to approval of H.R. 1424 by three committees of jurisdiction. This progress shows that Congress is poised to pass historic full parity legislation if policy differences can be resolved to produce one bill that is acceptable to both the Senate and House.

We have appreciated your longtime support for this issue. Please work with committee chairs and parity sponsors to pass strong parity legislation and send it to the President before the end of this year.

Sincerely,

AFL-CIO
Alliance for Children and Families
American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
American Academy of Neurology
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Academy of Physician Assistants
American Association for Geriatric Psychiatry
American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy
American Association of Children's Residential Centers

National organizations representing consumers, family members, advocates, professionals and providers
c/o Peter Newbould, American Psychological Association Practice Organization, 750 First Street, NE, Washington, DC 20002

American Association of Pastoral Counselors
American Association of Practicing Psychiatrists
American Association of Suicidology
American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine
American Counseling Association
American Federation of Teachers
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
American Gastroenterological Association
American Group Psychotherapy Association
American Hospital Association
American Jail Association
American Medical Association
American Mental Health Counselors Association
American Music Therapy Association
American Nurses Association
American Occupational Therapy Association
American Orthopsychiatric Association
American Psychiatric Association
American Psychiatric Nurses Association
American Psychoanalytic Association
American Psychological Association
American Psychotherapy Association
American School Health Association
American Society of Addiction Medicine
American Therapeutic Recreation Association
Anxiety Disorders Association of America
Association for the Advancement of Psychology
Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare
Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness
Association of American Medical Colleges
Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations
Association of Assistive Technology Act Programs
Association of Jewish Family & Children's Agencies
Association of University Centers on Disabilities
Association to Benefit Children
Autism Society of America
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
Betty Ford Center
Bradford Health Services
Caron Treatment Centers
The Carter Center Mental Health Program
Catholic Health Association of the United States
Center for Clinical Social Work
Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
Children's Defense Fund

Children's Hospital Boston
Child Welfare League of America
Clinical Social Work Association
Clinical Social Work Guild 49, OPEIU
College of Psychiatric and Neurologic Pharmacists
Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America
Council for Children with Behavior Disorders
Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation
Cumberland Heights Foundation
Dads and Daughters
Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance
Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund, Inc.
Division for Learning Disabilities (DLD) of the Council for Exceptional Children
Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy & Action
---A Chance to Heal
---Academy for Eating Disorders
---Anna Westin Foundation
---AABA of Philadelphia
---Alliance for Eating Disorders Awareness
---Avalon Hills Residential Eating Disorders Program
---Center for Change
---CEDAR Associates
---CRC Health Group
---Davis Y. Ja and Associates
---Eating Disorder Center of Denver
---Eating Disorder Hope
---Eating Disorder Referral and Information Center
---Eating Disorders Association of New Jersey
---Eating Disorders Information Network
---Eating Disorders Institute / Park Nicollet
---The Elisa Project
---The Emily Program
---Family & Friends Action Council
---Gail R. Schoenbach FREED Foundation
---Gürze Books
---International Association of Eating Disorders Professionals Foundation
---Kristen Watt Foundation
---Laureate Eating Disorders Program
---Maudsley Parents
---Monte Nido Residential Center
---National Eating Disorders Association
---Ophelia's Place
---Pennsylvania Educational Network for Eating Disorders
---Puente De Vida
---Rader Programs

---The Renfrew Center Foundation for Eating Disorders
---Remuda Ranch
---Rogers Memorial Hospital
---Rosewood Ranch
Ensuring Solutions to Alcohol Problems
Families For Depression Awareness
Families USA
Federation of American Hospitals
Federation of Behavioral, Psychological, & Cognitive Sciences
First Focus
First Nations Behavioral Health Association
Geriatric Mental Health Alliance of New York
Hazelden Foundation
Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago
Johnson Institute
Khmer Health Advocates
Kids Project
Kristin Brooks Hope Center
LDA, the Learning Disabilities Association of America
Legal Action Center
McHenry County Mental Health Board
Mental Health America
Mental Health Association of New York City
Mental Health Association of Westchester
NAADAC, The Association for Addiction Professionals
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Advocates for Pregnant Women
National Alliance for Research on Schizophrenia and Affective Disorders
National Alliance on Mental Illness
National Asian American Pacific Islander Mental Health Association
National Association for Children of Alcoholics
National Association for Children's Behavioral Health
National Association for the Dually Diagnosed
National Association for Rural Mental Health
National Association of Addiction Treatment Providers
National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders – ANAD
National Association of Community Health Centers
National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities
National Association of County and City Health Officials
National Association of County Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability Directors
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Association of Private Special Education Centers
National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems
National Association of School Psychologists
National Association of Social Workers

National Association of State Alcohol & Drug Abuse Directors
National Association of State Directors of Special Education
National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors
National Coalition of Mental Health Consumer Organizations
National Coalition of Mental Health Professionals and Consumers
National Association of Mental Health Planning & Advisory Councils
National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare
National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare
National Council of Jewish Women
National Council on Aging
National Council on Independent Living
National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc.
NCADD-New Jersey
National Disability Rights Network
National Down Syndrome Congress
National Down Syndrome Society
National Education Association
National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health
National Hopeline Network
National Indian Child Welfare Association
National Mental Health Awareness Campaign
National Network for Youth
National Partnership for Women and Families
National Rehabilitation Association
National Respite Coalition
NISH
Obsessive Compulsive Foundation
Pennsylvania Society for Clinical Social Work
School Social Work Association of America
Society for Research on Child Development
Society of Professors of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
Suicide Awareness Voices of Education
Suicide Prevention Action Network USA
Therapeutic Communities of America
Tourette Syndrome Association, Inc.
United Jewish Communities
United Methodist Church - General Board of Church and Society
United Neighborhood Centers of America
U.S. Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association
Wellstone Action
Witness Justice
Yellow Ribbon International Suicide Prevention Program