

Coalition for Fairness in Mental Illness Coverage

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Fairness Coalition Welcomes House Passage: MENTAL HEALTH GROUPS URGE SWIFT ACTION TO ACHIEVE STRONG MENTAL HEALTH PARITY LAW

WASHINGTON, DC (March 5, 2008) - The Coalition for Fairness in Mental Illness Coverage, an organization of mental health organizations representing consumers, family members, health professionals, healthcare systems, and administrators, welcomes the House passage of the Paul Wellstone Mental Health and Addiction Equity Act of 2007 (H.R.1424). House passage is an important step in achieving our goal of mental health parity for all Americans and we urge the House and Senate to come together swiftly to develop and pass a strong bill.

"Adoption of a strong parity bill acceptable to the Senate and House is within reach," said Pamela Greenberg, chair of the Fairness Coalition and president and CEO of the Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness. "Every day, lack of parity denies Americans access to needed mental health care, often with tragic results. With more than 30,000 suicides in this country every year, we cannot allow discriminatory barriers to needed care to stand any longer. Parity legislation will bring equitable coverage, and improved access to care to more than 100 million Americans."

The Fairness Coalition congratulates House leaders for moving this important legislation forward and calls on both bodies to ensure that the hard work they have already done to advance the goal of a strong parity law sparks swift action toward development and passage this year of a final bill. We cannot allow the millions of Americans with or at risk of these serious, and sometimes life-threatening, health problems to wait another year.

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Mental illness coverage. It's time to be fair by treating it equally in health care.

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