

Coalition for Fairness in Mental Illness Coverage

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Media Contacts:
Pamela Greenberg
Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness
202-756-7726, greenberg@abhw.org

MENTAL HEALTH GROUPS CHEER PASSAGE OF PARITY LEGISLATION

WASHINGTON, DC (2008) – The Coalition for Fairness in Mental Illness Coverage, which has led the fight for equitable mental health coverage for more than twelve years, applauds Congress for passage of the Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity & Addiction Equity Act of 2008.

“Years of hard work and perseverance have finally won a comprehensive parity bill that will become law,” said Pamela Greenberg, chair of the Fairness Coalition and president and CEO of the Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness. “This legislation will bring long awaited equitable coverage and improved access to care to more than 100 million Americans.”

Members of the Coalition salute the determined leadership of congressional champions of parity legislation including Senator Pete Domenici, the late Senator Paul Wellstone, Senator Ted Kennedy, Senator Michael Enzi, Representative Patrick Kennedy, Representative Jim Ramstad and their staff. Although parity legislation has travelled a long road, today’s historic vote owes much to the work of dedicated committee chairs, congressional staff, and the House and Senate Leadership; to the more than 200 organizations nationally representing the business and insurance communities, educators, public health, families, children, health care providers, the faith community, and many others; and to the thousands of Americans who have marched, called, and written Congress to press for fairness in mental health coverage.

“Passage of parity legislation offers new hope not only of improving access to needed treatment for the millions of Americans living with serious, and sometimes life-threatening, health problems, but of ending the insidious stigma still surrounding mental illness,” said Greenberg.

The Coalition for Fairness in Mental Illness Coverage members include: American Hospital Association, American Medical Association, American Psychiatric Association, American Psychological Association, Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness, Federation of American Hospitals, Mental Health America, National Alliance on Mental Illness, National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems. The organizations represent consumers, family members, health professionals, and health care systems and administrators.

Mental illness coverage. It’s time to be fair by treating it equally in health care.
1000 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 1825, Arlington, VA 22209