

Coalition for Fairness in Mental Illness Coverage

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MENTAL HEALTH GROUPS URGE SWIFT PASSAGE OF PARITY LEGISLATION

Economic Conditions Underscore Urgency of Congressional Action

WASHINGTON, DC (September 17, 2008) - The Coalition for Fairness in Mental Illness Coverage, a coalition formed more than twelve years ago to win equitable mental health coverage, is joining House and Senate champions today in urging swift passage of mental health and addiction equity legislation.

The Fairness Coalition congratulates House and Senate leaders for forging a historic agreement that not only establishes a comprehensive standard of equitable coverage, but is also supported by national organizations representing the business and insurance communities, educators, public health, families, children, health care providers, corrections' workers, the faith community, and others.

"With widespread agreement on a strong, balanced parity compromise in hand, passage of a critical fairness measure 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."

With economic conditions increasing the rates of anxiety, depression and family difficulties, Americans cannot afford to wait for some future Congress to act. The 110th Congress must pass parity now.

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.

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