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**STATEMENT**  
**ON SENATE AND HOUSE PASSAGE OF**  
***THE PAUL WELLSTONE AND PETE DOMENICI***  
***MENTAL HEALTH PARITY AND ADDICTION EQUITY ACT OF 2008***

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**Mark Covall, Executive Director**  
**National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems**

**September 24, 2008**

The U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives late last night each passed mental health parity bills (the *Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008*) that would require health insurance plans that offer mental health and addiction coverage to provide that coverage on par with financial and treatment coverage offered for other physical illnesses.

As an association representing behavioral healthcare organizations, professionals, and employers, the National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems (NAPHS) applauds this historic action.

We thank both the House and Senate for the hard work that led to passage of this compromise mental health parity bill. We appreciate the strong bipartisan support shown by the bill's sponsors as well as the House and Senate Leadership. Our particular thanks to those who introduced the original measures, including Senators Pete V. Domenici (R-NM), Edward M. Kennedy (D-MA), and Michael B. Enzi (R-WY) and Representatives Patrick Kennedy (D-RI) and Rep. Jim Ramstad (R-MN). We thank these leaders and the House and Senate co-sponsors for taking action that moves forward one of the most far-reaching and comprehensive efforts to provide fairness and equity in coverage for both mental and addictive disorders.

After all of this work, we cannot allow differences in how to pay for mental health parity to derail passage of this legislation at this late date.

We urge the House and Senate to work out the final details and to send this bill to the President now.

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