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Delaware

May 1, 2007

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The Honorable Patrick J. Kennedy
The Honorable Jim Ramstad
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

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Robert W. Glover, Ph.D.
Executive Director
NASMHPD

Dear Representatives Kennedy and Ramstad:

On behalf of the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors (NASMHPD), I am writing to offer our strong support for H.R. 1424, the Paul Wellstone Mental Health and Addiction Equity Act of 2007. NASMHPD represents state and territorial mental health commissioners/directors and their agencies that provide public mental health services to over 6 million people. Our members manage community-based systems of care as well as inpatient care in state psychiatric hospitals for individuals with serious mental illness.

It has been over ten years since the Congress passed the Mental Health Parity Act which prohibited annual and lifetime dollar limits for mental health care. This small but symbolically important first step left much work to done; it is now the time to fill remaining gaps by prohibiting treatment limitations and eliminating inequitable financial requirements. An ever-growing body of research, advanced especially during and since the 1990-2000 Decade of the Brain, demonstrates that mental and behavioral disorders are *brain* disorders and benefit in the same way as other physical disorders from advances in science. Scientific knowledge of mental illness has removed all justification for the wide-spread difference in insurance coverage for mental health benefits.

NASMHPD would like to emphasize the importance of the following provisions in H.R. 1424:

---Financial requirements such as co-pays and deductibles should be equal for all comparable mental health, addiction, medical and surgical services. Financial requirements reinforce the important principle of shared responsibility but should not create barriers for seeking needed treatment at the appropriate time and setting.

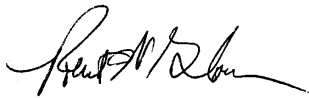
---Treatment limits on scope and duration of services should be comparable for all services. For all illness, the emphasis should be on developing effective treatments that inform the scope and duration of services; it is

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unacceptable to impose limitations for mental disorders that are more restrictive than for other illness.

The states' mental health directors commend you for your leadership on this critical national priority. We are pleased to add our voice to the growing chorus of support that was so clearly demonstrated during your highly successful "Equity Campaign Tour" along with the 265 co-sponsors of H.R. 1424.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert W. Glover". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Robert W. Glover, Ph.D.
Executive Director