



National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors

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April 2, 2008

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

The Honorable John D. Dingell, Jr.
Chairman
Energy and Commerce Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Timothy F. Murphy
Member
Energy and Commerce Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Dingell and Congressman Murphy:

On behalf of the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors (NASMHPD), I am writing to express our strong support for H.R. 5613, the Protecting the Medicaid Safety Net Act of 2008. NASMHPD represents the \$29.5 billion public mental health service delivery system serving 6.1 million annually. It is the only national association to represent state mental health commissioners/directors and their agencies.

By postponing the implementation of seven Medicaid regulations until April 1, 2009, this legislation gives Congress time to address the issues raised in the regulations as well as assess their combined impact on the states. Two of these regulations---rehabilitation option and case management---are of particular concern to NASMHPD members. The rehabilitative option pays for evidence-based practices such as Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) that provide comprehensive services to individuals with serious mental illnesses who are at risk of institutionalization. The savings of over \$2 billion from these proposed regulations were not included in the Deficit Reduction Act (DRA). While the DRA did recommend changes in case management services, it is our view that the interim final rule goes well beyond what Congress intended. Among the most concerning changes in the case management regulation is the reduction in days and other limits on case management services for individuals who are leaving institutions. The limitations that went into effect recently could have the unintended consequence of increasing re-institutionalization. These regulations jeopardize the effective delivery of case management services for individuals with mental illness who have complex needs related to housing, employment and health care.

Thank you for your leadership in building bipartisan support for the Medicaid program and for introducing legislation that will allow time to deliberate and assess the issues raised in the seven Medicaid regulations.

Sincerely,

Robert W. Glover, PhD
Executive Director

