

Mental Health Liaison Group

May 7, 2003

The Honorable Olympia J. Snowe
United States Senator
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John F. Kerry
United States Senator
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Snowe and Kerry:

The undersigned health and mental health organizations offer our thanks and support for your sponsorship of S. 853, the Medicare Mental Health Copayment Equity Act of 2003.

As you know, Medicare discriminates against patients seeking outpatient treatment for mental illness by requiring them to pay 50 percent of the cost of their own care out of pocket. S. 853 would require such patients to pay only the same 20% percent coinsurance required for all other Medicare Part B services by changing the coinsurance rate from 50/50% to 80/20% over six years. This legislation will reduce the financial burden currently imposed on elderly and disabled Medicare patients who, for no fault of their own, happen to suffer from mental illness. We know that early intervention and treatment make a tremendous difference in the lives of persons with mental disorders, and once fully phased in your bill will remove a significant financial barrier to those needing such care.

Thank you for your efforts to end discrimination against persons with mental disorders. We look forward to working with you to secure the enactment of the Medicare Mental Health Copayment Equity Act of 2003 as part of broader reform of the Medicare mental health benefit.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Children and Families
American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
American Association for Geriatric Psychiatry
American Association for Psychosocial Rehabilitation
American Association of Pastoral Counselors
American Association of Practicing Psychiatrists
American Board of Examiners in Clinical Social Work
American Counseling Association
American Family Foundation
American Group Psychotherapy Association
American Hospital Association
American Mental Health Counselors Association

National organizations representing consumers, family members, advocates, professionals and providers
c/o Peter Newbould, American Psychological Association Practice Organization, 750 First Street, NE, Washington, DC 20002

American Nurses Association
American Occupational Therapy Association
American Orthopsychiatric Association
American Psychoanalytic Association
American Psychiatric Association
American Psychiatric Nurses Association
American Psychological Association
American Psychotherapy Association
American Society of Clinical Psychopharmacology
Anxiety Disorders Association of America
Association for the Advancement of Psychology
Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
Central Conference of American Rabbis
Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
Child Welfare League of America
Clinical Social Work Federation
Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance
Employee Assistance Professionals Association
Federation of Behavioral, Psychological & Cognitive Sciences
Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health
International Society of Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurses
NAADAC, The Association for Addiction Professionals
National Alliance for the Mentally Ill
National Association for Children's Behavioral Health
National Association for Rural Mental Health
National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders -- ANAD
National Association of County Behavioral Health Directors
National Association of Mental Health Planning & Advisory Councils
National Association of Protection and Advocacy Systems
National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems
National Association of School Nurses
National Association of School Psychologists
National Association of Social Workers
National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors
National Coalition of Mental Health Consumers and Professionals
National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare
National Foundation for Depressive Illness
National Mental Health Association
National Mental Health Awareness Campaign
Suicide Prevention Action Network
Tourette Syndrome Association
Union of American Hebrew Congregations
Treatment and Research Advancements Association for Personality Disorder

Mental Health Liaison Group

May 7, 2003

The Honorable Mark Foley
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Richard E. Neal
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Foley and Neal:

The undersigned health and mental health organizations offer our thanks and support for your sponsorship of the Medicare Mental Health Copayment Equity Act of 2003.

As you know, Medicare discriminates against patients seeking outpatient treatment for mental illness by requiring them to pay 50 percent of the cost of their own care out of pocket. Your bill would require such patients to pay only the same 20% percent coinsurance required for all other Medicare Part B services by changing the coinsurance rate from 50/50% to 80/20% over six years. This legislation will reduce the financial burden currently imposed on elderly and disabled Medicare patients who, for no fault of their own, happen to suffer from mental illness. We know that early intervention and treatment make a tremendous difference in the lives of persons with mental disorders, and once fully phased in your bill will remove a significant financial barrier to those needing such care.

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