

Mental Health Liaison Group

June 25, 2003

The President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

The undersigned organizations are writing to ask you to renew your efforts to help get federal mental health parity legislation signed into law this year. We greatly appreciate your support of mental health issues, both with the appointment of the New Freedom Commission on Mental Health and your statement in April 2002 that you would work to pass full parity legislation to eliminate disparities in the coverage of mental health benefits.

As you know, the current law expires December 31, 2003. Simply passing another extension of the current partial parity law is not acceptable and further perpetuates the discrimination faced by those with a diagnosis of a mental disorder. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that the parity legislation currently before Congress will raise average premiums by less than one percent and this estimate does not include cost savings due to increased productivity, a healthier workforce and a decrease in disability costs. Furthermore, the Mental Health Equitable Treatment Act is supported by 65 Senators, 242 Members of the House and 269 advocacy organizations.

When the New Freedom Commission on Mental Health presents its report to you we hope that you will restate your support for passing and signing mental health parity legislation and push for this to occur. Given the lack of any congressional action on parity this year, we firmly believe that your involvement is critical to enactment of such legislation. With your initial helpful step to move Congress on this issue, it has become clear that White House leadership is needed to bring both chambers together to develop legislation acceptable to all parties.

The undersigned organizations and the many people in the United States with a mental disorder hope that you will actively work with Congress to pass mental health parity legislation this year.

Sincerely,

Advocates for Youth
Alliance for Children and Families
Alzheimer's Association
American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
American Academy of Neurology
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Association for Geriatric Psychiatry
American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy

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 Association for Psychosocial Rehabilitation
American Association of Children's Residential Centers
American Association of Pastoral Counselors
American Association of Practicing Psychiatrists
American Association of Suicidology
American Board of Examiners in Clinical Social Work
American College of Nurse-Midwives
American College of Physicians
American Congress of Community Supports and Employment Services (ACCSES)
American Counseling Association
American Family Foundation
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees
American Federation of Teachers
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
American Group Psychotherapy Association
American Hospital Association
American Managed Behavioral Healthcare Association
American Medical Association
American Medical Student Association
American Mental Health Counselors Association
American Music Therapy Association
American Nurses Association
American Occupational Therapy Association
American Orthopsychiatric Association
American Osteopathic Association
American Psychiatric Association
American Psychiatric Nurses Association
American Psychoanalytic Association
American Psychological Association
American Psychotherapy Association
American Public Health Association
American School Health Association
American Society of Addiction Medicine
American Society of Clinical Pharmacology
American Therapeutic Recreation Association
America's HealthTogether
Anxiety Disorders Association of America
Asian Counseling & Referral Service, Washington State
Association for the Advancement of Psychology
Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare
Association for Science in Autism Treatment
Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations
Association of Jewish Aging Services of North America
Association of Jewish Family & Children's Agencies

Association of University Centers on Disabilities
Association to Benefit Children
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
Brain Injury Association of America, Inc.
Center for the Advancement of Health
Child & Adolescent Bipolar Foundation
Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
Children's Healthcare Is a Legal Duty
Children's Hospital Boston
Child Welfare League of America
Clinical Social Work Federation
Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation
Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance
Disability Service Providers of America
Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy & Action
Employee Assistance Professionals Association
Families For Depression Awareness
Families USA
Family Voices
Federation of American Hospitals
Federation of Behavioral, Psychological & Cognitive Sciences
Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health
International Association of Jewish Vocational Services
International Association of Psychosocial Rehabilitation Services
International Society of Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurses
Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago
Kids Project
Kristen Watt Foundation for Eating Disorder Awareness
Legal Action Center
Lutheran Ofc. for Governmental Affairs, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Lutheran Services in America
MentalHealth AMERICA, Inc.
NAADAC, The Association for Addiction Professionals
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Alliance for the Mentally Ill
National Alliance for Research on Schizophrenia and Affective Disorders
National Asian American Pacific Islander Mental Health Association
National Association for Children's Behavioral Health
National Association for the Dually Diagnosed
National Association for Rural Mental Health
National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders -- ANAD
National Association of Case Management
National Association of Counties
National Association of County Behavioral Health Directors
National Association of Mental Health Planning & Advisory Councils
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners

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 Directors of Special Education
National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors
National Center for Policy Research for Women & Families
National Coalition Against Domestic Violence
National Coalition of Mental Health Consumers and Professionals
National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare
National Council on the Aging
National Council on Problem Gambling
National Foundation for Depressive Illness
National Hispanic Medical Association
National Housing Conference
National Latino Behavioral Health Association
National Mental Health Association
National Mental Health Awareness Campaign
National Multiple Sclerosis Society
National Organization for Rare Disorders
National Partnership for Women and Families
National Rural Health Association
NETWORK, a Catholic Social Justice Lobby
Obsessive Compulsive Foundation
Presbyterian Church (USA) Washington Office
Samaritans Suicide Prevention Center
School Social Work Association of America
Service Employees International Union
Society for Adolescent Medicine
Society for Personality Assessment
Society for Research on Child Development
Society for Social Work Research
Society for Women's Health Research
Society of Professors of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
Suicide Prevention Action Network USA
The Arc of the United States
Tourette Syndrome Association
Treatment and Research Advancements Association for Personality Disorder
Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations
United Cerebral Palsy Association
United Jewish Communities
United Methodist General Board of Church and Society
Volunteers of America
Wellstone Action
Women of Reform Judaism
Yellow Ribbon Suicide Prevention Program