

# Mental Health Liaison Group

December 10, 2007

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House  
H-232 Capitol Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Harry Reid  
Senate Majority Leader  
S-221 Capitol Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Madam Speaker and Leader Reid:

The undersigned organizations are writing to urge you to give the highest priority to passing a strong mental health and addiction parity law this year.

Millions of Americans with or at risk of mental health or substance use disorders continue to experience health insurance discrimination because federal law still allows arbitrary barriers on coverage of needed services. Despite widespread support, legislation that would close the loopholes in the existing partial parity law by outlawing arbitrary benefit limits has been blocked in every Congress since 1999. As every year more than 31,000 Americans die by suicide and an estimated 1.4 million individuals attempt suicide, passing parity is a matter of life and death.

Finally, the parity logjam was broken in September by unanimous Senate passage of S. 558, a landmark bill supported by hundreds of health, social welfare and consumer organizations as well as by former parity opponents in the employer and insurer community. Broad support for parity legislation in the House has led to approval of H.R. 1424 by three committees of jurisdiction. This progress shows that Congress is poised to pass historic full parity legislation if policy differences can be resolved to produce one bill that is acceptable to both the Senate and House.

We have appreciated your longtime support for this issue. Please work with committee chairs and parity sponsors to pass strong parity legislation and send it to the President before the end of this year.

Sincerely,

AFL-CIO  
Alliance for Children and Families  
American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry  
American Academy of Neurology  
American Academy of Pediatrics  
American Academy of Physician Assistants  
American Association for Geriatric Psychiatry  
American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy  
American Association of Children's Residential Centers

American Association of Pastoral Counselors  
American Association of Practicing Psychiatrists  
American Association of Suicidology  
American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine  
American Counseling Association  
American Federation of Teachers  
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention  
American Gastroenterological Association  
American Group Psychotherapy Association  
American Hospital Association  
American Jail Association  
American Medical Association  
American Mental Health Counselors Association  
American Music Therapy Association  
American Nurses Association  
American Occupational Therapy Association  
American Orthopsychiatric Association  
American Psychiatric Association  
American Psychiatric Nurses Association  
American Psychoanalytic Association  
American Psychological Association  
American Psychotherapy Association  
American School Health Association  
American Society of Addiction Medicine  
American Therapeutic Recreation Association  
Anxiety Disorders Association of America  
Association for the Advancement of Psychology  
Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare  
Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness  
Association of American Medical Colleges  
Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations  
Association of Assistive Technology Act Programs  
Association of Jewish Family & Children's Agencies  
Association of University Centers on Disabilities  
Association to Benefit Children  
Autism Society of America  
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law  
Betty Ford Center  
Bradford Health Services  
Caron Treatment Centers  
The Carter Center Mental Health Program  
Catholic Health Association of the United States  
Center for Clinical Social Work  
Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder  
Children's Defense Fund

Children's Hospital Boston  
Child Welfare League of America  
Clinical Social Work Association  
Clinical Social Work Guild 49, OPEIU  
College of Psychiatric and Neurologic Pharmacists  
Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America  
Council for Children with Behavior Disorders  
Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation  
Cumberland Heights Foundation  
Dads and Daughters  
Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance  
Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund, Inc.  
Division for Learning Disabilities (DLD) of the Council for Exceptional Children  
Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy & Action  
---A Chance to Heal  
---Academy for Eating Disorders  
---Anna Westin Foundation  
---AABA of Philadelphia  
---Alliance for Eating Disorders Awareness  
---Avalon Hills Residential Eating Disorders Program  
---Center for Change  
---CEDAR Associates  
---CRC Health Group  
---Davis Y. Ja and Associates  
---Eating Disorder Center of Denver  
---Eating Disorder Hope  
---Eating Disorder Referral and Information Center  
---Eating Disorders Association of New Jersey  
---Eating Disorders Information Network  
---Eating Disorders Institute / Park Nicollet  
---The Elisa Project  
---The Emily Program  
---Family & Friends Action Council  
---Gail R. Schoenbach FREED Foundation  
---Gürze Books  
---International Association of Eating Disorders Professionals Foundation  
---Kristen Watt Foundation  
---Laureate Eating Disorders Program  
---Maudsley Parents  
---Monte Nido Residential Center  
---National Eating Disorders Association  
---Ophelia's Place  
---Pennsylvania Educational Network for Eating Disorders  
---Puente De Vida  
---Rader Programs

---The Renfrew Center Foundation for Eating Disorders  
---Remuda Ranch  
---Rogers Memorial Hospital  
---Rosewood Ranch  
Ensuring Solutions to Alcohol Problems  
Families For Depression Awareness  
Families USA  
Federation of American Hospitals  
Federation of Behavioral, Psychological, & Cognitive Sciences  
First Focus  
First Nations Behavioral Health Association  
Geriatric Mental Health Alliance of New York  
Hazelden Foundation  
Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago  
Johnson Institute  
Khmer Health Advocates  
Kids Project  
Kristin Brooks Hope Center  
LDA, the Learning Disabilities Association of America  
Legal Action Center  
McHenry County Mental Health Board  
Mental Health America  
Mental Health Association of New York City  
Mental Health Association of Westchester  
NAADAC, The Association for Addiction Professionals  
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd  
National Advocates for Pregnant Women  
National Alliance for Research on Schizophrenia and Affective Disorders  
National Alliance on Mental Illness  
National Asian American Pacific Islander Mental Health Association  
National Association for Children of Alcoholics  
National Association for Children's Behavioral Health  
National Association for the Dually Diagnosed  
National Association for Rural Mental Health  
National Association of Addiction Treatment Providers  
National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders – ANAD  
National Association of Community Health Centers  
National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities  
National Association of County and City Health Officials  
National Association of County Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability Directors  
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners  
National Association of Private Special Education Centers  
National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems  
National Association of School Psychologists  
National Association of Social Workers

National Association of State Alcohol & Drug Abuse Directors  
National Association of State Directors of Special Education  
National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors  
[National Coalition of Mental Health Consumer Organizations](#)  
National Coalition of Mental Health Professionals and Consumers  
National Association of Mental Health Planning & Advisory Councils  
National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare  
National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare  
National Council of Jewish Women  
National Council on Aging  
National Council on Independent Living  
National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc.  
NCADD-New Jersey  
National Disability Rights Network  
National Down Syndrome Congress  
National Down Syndrome Society  
National Education Association  
National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health  
National Hopeline Network  
National Indian Child Welfare Association  
National Mental Health Awareness Campaign  
National Network for Youth  
National Partnership for Women and Families  
National Rehabilitation Association  
National Respite Coalition  
NISH  
Obsessive Compulsive Foundation  
Pennsylvania Society for Clinical Social Work  
School Social Work Association of America  
Society for Research on Child Development  
Society of Professors of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry  
Suicide Awareness Voices of Education  
Suicide Prevention Action Network USA  
Therapeutic Communities of America  
Tourette Syndrome Association, Inc.  
United Jewish Communities  
United Methodist Church - General Board of Church and Society  
United Neighborhood Centers of America  
U.S. Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association  
Wellstone Action  
Witness Justice  
Yellow Ribbon International Suicide Prevention Program