

Mental Health Liaison Group

May 16, 2001

The Honorable Olympia J. Snowe
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John F. Kerry
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Snowe and Kerry:

The undersigned health and mental health organizations offer our thanks and support for your sponsorship of the Medicare Mental Illness Non-Discrimination Act (S. 841).

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. 841 would require such patients to pay only the same 20 percent copayment required for all other Medicare Part B services. 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 your bill removes 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 Illness Non-Discrimination Act, S. 841 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 Marriage and Family Therapy
American Association for Psychosocial Rehabilitation
American Association of Children's Residential Centers
American Association of Pastoral Counselors
American Association of Private Practice Psychiatrists
American Board of Examiners in Clinical Social Work
American Counseling Association
American Family Foundation
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees
American Group Psychotherapy Association
American Mental Health Counselors Association
American Nurses Association
American Occupational Therapy Association
American Orthopsychiatric Association

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

American Psychiatric Association
American Psychiatric Nurses Association
American Psychoanalytic Association
American Psychological Association
Anxiety Disorders Association of America
Association for the Advancement of Psychology
Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
Clinical Social Work Federation
Corporation for the Advancement of Psychiatry
Employee Assistance Professionals Association
Federation of Behavioral, Psychological & Cognitive Sciences
Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health
International Association of Psychosocial Rehabilitation Services
MentalHealth AMERICA, Inc.
National Alliance for the Mentally Ill
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 Protection and Advocacy Systems
National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems
National Association of Psychiatric Treatment Centers for Children
National Association of School Psychologists
National Association of Social Workers
National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors
National Coalition for the Homeless
National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare
National Depressive and Manic-Depressive Association
National Mental Health Association
Tourette Syndrome Association