

Mental Health Liaison Group

June 16, 2009

The Honorable Edward M. Kennedy
Chairman
Committee on Health, Education,
Labor and Pensions
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Michael B. Enzi
Ranking Member
Committee on Health, Education,
Labor and Pensions
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Kennedy and Ranking Member Enzi:

The undersigned organizations in the Mental Health Liaison Group are writing to express our enthusiastic support for the Committee's draft "Affordable Health Choices Act." We commend you for your outstanding leadership, vision and ongoing efforts to ensure that all individuals have access to affordable and quality health care services.

We greatly appreciate the bill's significant focus on MHLG priorities as enunciated in our May 12 letter to you (<http://www.mhlg.org/05-12-09.pdf>). We are gratified that the bill integrates mental health and substance use services into primary care and other health care settings. The inclusion of mental health and substance use services in benefit packages will result in the good work of the Wellstone/Domenici Act continuing into this legislation and these services being available at parity with medical/surgical services. We welcome the attention in the bill to coordination of care for persons with chronic conditions, remediation of health disparities, consumer choice, and numerous other reforms.

We look forward to working with you and Committee members as the legislative process progresses.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Children and Families
American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
American Association for Geriatric Psychiatry
American Association of Pastoral Counselors
American Association of Practicing Psychiatrists
American Counseling Association
American Group Psychotherapy Association
American Mental Health Counselors Association
American Nurses Association
American Occupational Therapy Association
American Psychiatric Nurses Association
American Psychoanalytic 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 Psychological Association
American Psychotherapy Association
Association for the Advancement of Psychology
Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
Center for Clinical Social Work
Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
Child Welfare League of America
Clinical Social Work Association
Clinical Social Work Guild 49, OPEIU
Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance
Mental Health America
NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals
National Alliance on Mental Illness
National Alliance to End Homelessness
National Association for Children's Behavioral Health
National Association for Rural Mental Health
National Association of County Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability Directors
National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders – ANAD
National Association of Mental Health Planning & Advisory Councils
National Association of School Psychologists
National Association of Social Workers
National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors
National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare
National Disability Rights Network
National Foundation for Mental Health
Suicide Prevention Action Network USA, a Division of AFSP
Tourette Syndrome Association
United Neighborhood Centers of America
Witness Justice