



NEWS RELEASE

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NAPHS Applauds Final Passage of Bipartisan Legislation To Extend and Expand the Medicaid Emergency Psychiatric Demonstration Project

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#### **Bill Next Goes to President for Signature**

(Washington, DC, November 20, 2015)... This week Congress passed and will send to the President bipartisan legislation to improve access to emergency psychiatric care for adult Medicaid beneficiaries.

On Monday the U.S. House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed S.599, the *Improving Access to Emergency Psychiatric Care Act of 2015*. This legislation was passed by unanimous consent by the Senate earlier this fall and given final Senate approval on Thursday. The legislation will now go to President Obama for signature.

The measure was originally introduced by Sens. Ben Cardin (D-MD), Patrick Toomey (R-PA), and Susan Collins (R-ME) to keep alive the Medicaid Emergency Psychiatric Demonstration Project, which would have ended this year without Congressional action. Identical legislation (H.R.3681) was introduced by Reps. John Sarbanes (D-MD) and Susan Brooks (R-IN) in the House.

The budget-neutral bill allows 10 states and the District of Columbia to continue to serve adult Medicaid beneficiaries (ages 21-64) who would otherwise be prohibited from accessing short-term acute care in psychiatric hospitals because of the "Institutions for Mental Disease" (IMD) exclusion. The bill also gives the U.S. Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary discretion to expand the demonstration nationwide.

"As an association representing professionals and facilities delivering behavioral health care, the National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems (NAPHS) commends Congress for taking bipartisan action to address the critical need for timely access to life-saving psychiatric hospital treatment," said NAPHS President and CEO Mark Covall. "We especially want to thank the outstanding leadership of Sens. Cardin, Toomey, and Collins along with Reps. Sarbanes and Brooks, all of whom worked tirelessly to get this legislation passed. The three-year demonstration has proven that it can make a real difference in the lives of some of the most vulnerable Americans by giving adults with mental illnesses and substance use disorders access to the same hospital treatment that their Medicaid insurance card covers for other conditions," Covall said.

"The passage of this legislation is another step in making the types of reforms needed to save lives, communities, and money," Covall added. "Now we need to continue this momentum by passing comprehensive mental health reform that includes a permanent fix to the IMD exclusion for short-term psychiatric hospital care."

The National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems (NAPHS) advocates for behavioral health and represents provider systems that are committed to the delivery of responsive, accountable, and clinically effective prevention, treatment, and care for children, adolescents, adults, and older adults with mental and substance use disorders. Its members are behavioral healthcare provider organizations that own or manage more than 800 specialty psychiatric hospitals, general hospital psychiatric and addiction treatment units and behavioral healthcare divisions, residential treatment facilities, youth services organizations, and extensive outpatient networks. The association was founded in 1933.

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