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Medicaid for Children & Youth with Emotional and Substance Use Disorders

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Medicaid Dollars Spent on Children and Youth with Emotional and Substance Use Disorders Pay Long-term Dividends, Associations Tell Congress



NACBH and NAPHS Release a Shared Vision of "Principles for Treatment"

(Washington, DC, March 21, 2006).....In a briefing today on Capitol Hill, the National Association for Children's Behavioral Health (NACBH) and the National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems (NAPHS) called on Congress to pay attention to the needs of children and youth with emotional and substance use disorders as they work on implementing the 2007 Medicaid budget. To help policymakers understand the critical role that Medicaid plays in maintaining healthy communities, the two associations also released a shared vision of *Principles for Treatment of Children and Youth with Emotional and Substance Use Disorders*.

"Children and adolescents with emotional and substance use disorders—and their families—are one of the most at-risk populations served by the Medicaid program – and one of the populations that can benefit most from early and appropriate behavioral healthcare interventions," the associations said in the preamble to the *Principles* document. "Without Medicaid, there is no access to or coverage of mental health care for many of our country's most vulnerable—and treatable—children and youth." One-fourth of American children (25%) at some point in their lives have coverage through Medicaid. Six of every 10 low-income children rely on Medicaid at some point, as do 39% of near-poor children.

NACBH and NAPHS called on Congress to take action to ensure that all children and adolescents have access to a full array of comprehensive mental health services within Medicaid. They urged Congress and the states to reject proposed cuts in the federal government's 2007 budget which would affect critical

components of the Medicaid mental health benefit, including Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment; targeted case management; the rehab and clinic options; and the psychiatric under-21 benefit.

“Children are not little adults. They need, and deserve, a full array of overlapping and intersecting services and supports,” said NACBH Executive Director **Joy Midman** in releasing the shared *Principles* document. “Medicaid has been the safety net for so many who would not have access to early intervention, assessment, and treatment. Children who live at or below poverty, children whose family resources have been exhausted, children not covered by private insurance—all rely on Medicaid. Appropriate and relevant mental health services save lives, promise hope, and save needed resources—both human and financial,” she said. “We urge Congress and states to protect, maintain, and promote the full array of needed health services for children and youth. They must become everyone’s political priority. It is a practical imperative.”

“Sound policy must be built on helping children and youth get the services they need at the right time and in the right setting,” said NAPHS Executive Director **Mark Covall**. “We also need to recognize there are young people who have more serious problems, and they need access to safe and secure environments such as residential treatment centers. Children need access to a full array of services so we can meet the needs of these kids in an appropriate and effective way.”

Together NACBH and NAPHS asked Congress and the states to support four policy actions:

- Ensure that a comprehensive evaluation and screening of children [such as Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT)] is available.
- Protect coordination of services through case management.
- Protect the rehab and clinic options within Medicaid.
- Clarify the conditions under which both the government and providers administer, operate, and monitor the psychiatric “under-21” benefit to ensure that young people most at risk and most in need are receiving high-quality 24-hour behavioral health services.

For a copy of the *Principles for Treatment of Children and Youth with Emotional and Substance Use Disorders*, go to www.nacbh.org or www.naphs.org.

About the Associations

The National Association for Children’s Behavioral Health works to promote the availability and delivery of appropriate and relevant services to children and youth with, or at risk of, serious emotional or behavioral disturbances and their families. NACBH members are multi-service providers of mental health and substance abuse treatment, family and child services and supports, educational and juvenile justice programs. Including both non-profits and for-profits, with roots in the child welfare, health care or juvenile justice arenas, all are committed to creating responsive systems of care for children and families dealing with emotional and behavioral disturbances.

The National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems 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 600 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.