

PARITY IMPLEMENTATION COALITION

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RELEASE OF MEDICAID PARITY PROPOSED RULE LAUDED AS IMPORTANT STEP FOR THOSE WITH ADDICTION AND MENTAL ILLNESS

WASHINGTON, D.C.—April 15, 2015 —Members of the Parity Implementation Coalition, a group of addiction and mental health consumer and provider organizations committed to the implementation of the 2008 parity law, are pleased that the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) released a proposed rule applying the Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act (MHPAEA) to Medicaid Managed Care plans, Alternative Benefit Plans and the Children's Health Insurance Program.

"It is my hope that this rule will lead to Medicaid plans coming into compliance in the same manner as commercial plans – with the same rights, benefits, and access to care. Many lessons have already been learned from the implementation of the 2013 Final Rule that we know must be applied here. There is still urgent work to be done and we have to get this right. I look forward to working with the Obama Administration to ensure parity's full implementation," said former Congressman Patrick Kennedy, House parity champion and internationally recognized civil and mental health rights activist.

Andrew Sperling, Director of Federal Legislative Advocacy for the National Alliance on Mental Illness, said, "We are pleased these rules improve access to care for those with Medicaid Managed Care, the Children's Health Insurance Program, and Alternative Benefits Plans and we hope to see the forthcoming guidance from the Administration on this important issue within 6 months."

Mark Covall, President and CEO of the National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems, said, "We are encouraged by the release of this proposed rule and look forward to working with the Administration and health plans to ensure the significant improvements in access to mental health and addiction treatment services become a reality for individuals and families who need mental health and addiction treatment."

The Coalition will be filing comments in response to the proposed rule by June 9th.

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The Parity Implementation Coalition includes the American Psychiatric Association, American Society of Addiction Medicine, Cumberland Heights, Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation, MedPro Billing, Mental Health America, National Alliance on Mental Illness, National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems, National Association of Addiction Treatment Providers, The Watershed Addiction Treatment Programs and Young People in Recovery. The organizations advanced parity legislation and implementing regulations for over fourteen years in an effort to end discrimination against individuals and families who seek services for mental health and substance use disorders and remain committed to its effective implementation. More information about the Coalition is available at www.parityispersonal.org.