



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Carole Szpak
202/393-6700, ext. 101
comm@naphs.org

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

(Washington, DC, September 29, 2015).....Late last night, the U.S. Senate passed S.599, the *Improving Access to Emergency Psychiatric Care Act of 2015*. The measure was 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 ends this year without Congressional action. The budget-neutral bill would allow Medicaid beneficiaries in 10 demonstration states and the District of Columbia to continue to serve adults (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 would also give 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) appreciates the bipartisan leadership that Congress is providing to treat mental and addictive disorders equally with physical disorders," said NAPHS President and CEO Mark Covall. "The Senate's passage of S.599 is an important step toward the types of reforms needed to save lives, communities, and money. 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 access to the same hospital treatment that their Medicaid insurance card covers for all other conditions," he said.

"We appreciate the action the Senate has taken toward providing timely access to essential psychiatric hospital care. NAPHS urges the U.S. House of Representatives to consider similar legislation to extend and expand this life-saving demonstration that is helping people with mental and addictive disorders get help when they need it most," Covall said.

"At the same time, we continue to urge Congress to pass a permanent exception to the IMD exclusion for short-term psychiatric hospital care as part of comprehensive mental health reform. It is time to end discrimination."

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.

#####