



Public Policy Action Alert

Representatives Kennedy and Ramstad Want Your Help Call for a Vote on Mental Health Parity!

BACKGROUND

As you know, Congressman Kennedy (D-RI) and Congressman Ramstad (R-MN) introduced The Paul Wellstone Mental Health Equitable Treatment Act (H.R. 1402). This legislation to end insurance discrimination against mental health and addiction treatment is cosponsored by a bipartisan majority of 230 Representatives. The House leadership has refused to give it a fair up-or-down vote. Representatives Kennedy and Ramstad have launched an effort to force a vote and your help is NEEDED!

Under House rules, if 218 Representatives sign a "discharge petition," the bill is automatically brought to the Floor for consideration. Representatives Kennedy and Ramstad recently launched a discharge petition and in two days 165 signatures were on the petition. To get the remaining 53 signatures, they need your help.

The Kennedy-Ramstad bill, H.R. 1402, addresses discrimination in group health plans against persons with mental or substance use disorders. It would expand the Mental Health Parity Act of 1996 by prohibiting group health plans from imposing treatment or financial limitations on mental health benefits that are different from those applied to medical/surgical services. The legislation closes the loopholes that allow discrimination in the co-payment, coinsurance, deductible, maximum out-of-pocket limit and day and visit limits. It applies only to group health plans already providing mental health benefits, and excludes (as does current law) health plans sponsored by employers of fewer than 50 people.

New data has proven that parity in the Federal Employee Health Benefit Program has had minimal cost. Members of Congress and their staffs are among the 8.5 million federal employees, retirees and dependents who have had parity for BOTH mental health and substance use disorders since January 2001. H.R. 1402 was modeled on that federal employee benefit.

ACTION

Contact your Representative using our easy alert system below. Also, Members of Congress are campaigning this month and attending many public forums. These are perfect

opportunities to ask them to commit to signing the discharge petition. Please do what you can, and ask others to do the same.

We've made contacting your US Representative as easy as 1-2-3...

- 1) Go to <http://capwiz.com/chadd/issues/alert/?alertid=9081666&type=CO>
- 2) Fill out the form
- 3) Click "Send Message"