



Illinois Psychiatric Society

NEWS RELEASE

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Congress passes Wellstone-Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008

Chicago, Illinois - The Illinois Psychiatric Society (IPS), a state association of the American Psychiatric Association (APA), congratulates Congress for passing and the President for signing legislation that will provide equal access to millions of Americans who seek treatment for mental illness. IPS applauds Senators Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) and Pete Domenici (R-N.M.) and Representatives Patrick Kennedy (D-R.I.) and Jim Ramstad (R-Minn.), as well as Senate and House leadership key committee chairmen for their tireless work on this momentous legislation. IPS would also like to thank Senator Dick Durbin and Congressman Danny K. Davis for their strong support of this legislation.

Enactment of the Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008, included within the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008, H.R. 1424, ensures that coverage of mental health treatment will now be on par with coverage for other health conditions.

“This is an historic day that patients, psychiatrists and other mental health providers have long awaited,” said APA President, and former IPS President, Nada L. Stotland, M.D., M.P.H. “This legislation is a reflection of the American public’s recognition that mental illnesses are real and treatable and that fair coverage is to everyone’s benefit.” For example, studies have shown that untreated depression results in an estimated \$4 billion a year in lost productivity and work absences. Research has shown that when depression management was included in employee health plans, productivity increased more than 6%, and absenteeism declined 28% while saving \$2,601 for each affected employee.

This legislation will improve coverage for 113 million people, including 82 million in employer-sponsored plans that are not subject to state regulation. The bill ensures equal coverage for mental health services with other medical and surgical benefits.

About the Illinois Psychiatric Association:

The Illinois Psychiatric Association is a district branch of a national medical specialty society whose more than 38,000 physician members specialize in diagnosis, treatment, prevention and research of mental illnesses including substance use disorders. Visit the APA at www.psych.org and www.HealthyMinds.org.