



Liberty Place, Suite 700
325 Seventh Street, NW
Washington, DC 20004-2802
(202) 638-1100 Phone
www.aha.org

February 9, 2007

The Honorable Pete V. Domenici
United States Senate
328 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Domenici:

On behalf of the American Hospital Association (AHA) and our nearly 5,000 member hospitals, health systems and other health care organizations, and our 37,000 individual members, I am writing to support the Senator Paul Wellstone Mental Health Parity Act of 2007. We commend you, Senator Kennedy and Senator Enzi, for your leadership in promoting nondiscriminatory insurance coverage for those who suffer from mental illness and mental health problems.

It is time to end health plan policies that discriminate against people with mental illness. While the Mental Health Parity Act of 1996 provided for parity between mental health and physical health insurance coverage only with respect to annual and lifetime dollar limits, your bill creates full parity for annual and lifetime dollar limits, hospital days, outpatient visits, co-pays, deductibles and out-of-pocket expenses. This expansion to full parity is critical, as experience with the 1996 law shows that many employers eliminated discriminatory dollar limits on mental health coverage, but created new discriminatory restrictions on other aspects of the mental health benefit plan. It is essential that all Americans have access to fair and equal coverage for mental and physical health because mental health parity increases productivity and economic well being for individuals, families and communities.

We look forward to working with you and your staff to enact the Senator Paul Wellstone Mental Health Parity Act of 2007 and to ensure necessary mental health coverage for all Americans who suffer from mental illness.

Sincerely,

Rick Pollack
Executive Vice President

This letter was also sent to Senators Edward M. Kennedy and Michael B. Enzi

