

We thank you for your leadership on this important issue.

Sincerely,

MARC LERRO,  
Executive Director.

PAUL WELLSTONE MENTAL  
HEALTH AND ADDICTION EQUITY  
ACT OF 2007

SPEECH OF

HON. PATRICK J. KENNEDY

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 5, 2008

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. Speaker, I would like to have the following letters of support for H.R. 1424, the Paul Wellstone Mental Health and Addiction Equity Act, submitted for the RECORD on the floor debate of this bill.

THE BETTY FORD CENTER,  
Rancho Mirage, CA,  
MARCH 3, 2008.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,  
Speaker of the House of Representatives, Capitol  
Building, Washington, DC.

Hon. JOHN BOEHNER,  
Republican Leader, House of Representatives,  
Capitol Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER PELOSI AND LEADER BOEHNER: On behalf of the Betty Ford Center, I am writing to express my strong support for H.R. 1424, the Paul Wellstone Mental Health and Addiction Equity Act. This landmark legislation would prohibit insurance discrimination against 80 million Americans suffering from addiction and mental illness.

I am writing because our country cannot afford the continued burden of untreated addiction and mental illness. Untreated addiction costs Americans \$400 billion each year. Moreover, each year, 1.3 billion work days are lost due to mental disorders, more than arthritis, stroke, heart attack and cancer combined and workers with untreated alcoholism cost their employers \$135 billion in lost productivity annually.

The time for the passage of parity is now. Over 25 million people need mental health and addiction treatment but are not getting it. Legislation to bring full equity to mental health coverage has been introduced in the House in every Congress since the 107th session but until this year, it never received consideration in committees or on the floor despite bipartisan majority cosponsorship. Now, H.R. 1424, introduced by Representatives PATRICK KENNEDY (D-RI) and JIM RAMSTAD (R-MN), has the support of the majority of the House with 273 cosponsors. The bill has been favorably reported by the Ways and Means, Energy and Commerce and Education and Labor Committees. In 2007, the Betty Ford Center was pleased to join with families, providers, employers and state and local officials at fourteen different field hearings held around the country. These hearings documented the need for equity in health plans for the treatment of addiction and mental illness. The record shows parity is a priority that must be passed now.

I am hopeful the House of Representatives will pass H.R. 1424 this week with a strong bipartisan majority. The Betty Ford Center stands ready to assist you and your colleagues in the Senate in making equitable treatment for addiction and mental health in health plans a reality for all Americans in 2008.

Sincerely,

MRS. BETTY FORD.

BRAIN INJURY ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA,  
Vienna, VA, March 3, 2008.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,  
Speaker of the House of Representatives,  
Washington, DC.

Hon. JOHN BOEHNER,  
Republican Leader, House of Representatives,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER PELOSI AND LEADER BOEHNER: On behalf of the Brain Injury Association of America, I am writing to express our support for H.R. 1424, the Paul Wellstone Mental Health and Addiction Equity Act, which would prohibit insurance discrimination against 80 million Americans suffering from addiction and mental illness.

An intricate and intertwined relationship exists between substance abuse, mental health, and traumatic brain injury (TBI). Substance use and abuse is often both an antecedent to and a consequence of TBI. Incidence data indicate that substance abuse significantly raises an individual's risk of sustaining a brain injury. TBI is one of the most common and tragic consequences of substance abuse, especially by teenagers and young adults. In addition, neurobehavioral problems commonly arise as a direct result of TBI, and psychotherapeutic services are integral to successful neurorehabilitation programs. Access to comprehensive and specialized addiction and mental health services is critical to maximizing the recovery of individuals brain injury.

The time for the passage of parity is now. More than 25 million people need mental health and addiction treatment but are not getting it. Legislation to bring full equity to mental health coverage has been introduced in the House in every Congress since the 107th session but until this year, it never received consideration in committees or on the floor despite bipartisan majority cosponsorship. Note, the Paul Wellstone Mental Health and Addiction Equity Act (H.R. 1424), introduced by Representatives Patrick Kennedy (D-RI) and Jim Ramstad (R-MN), has the support of the majority of the House with 273 cosponsors. The bill has been favorably reported by the Ways and Means, Energy and Commerce and Education and Labor Committees. Remarkably, 14 different field hearings documenting the need for equity in health plans for the treatment of addiction and mental illness were held around the country in 2007. The record shows parity is a priority that must be passed now.

Because of the critical nature of this legislation, the Brain Injury Association of America urges you to pass H.R. 1424 when it comes to the floor this week. Our organization stands ready to assist you toward the goal of achieving fairness in health plans for all Americans.

SINCERELY,  
SUSAN H. CONNORS,  
President/CEO,

Brain Injury Association of America.

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR COMMUNITY  
BEHAVIORAL HEALTHCARE,  
March 3, 2008.

Hon. PATRICK J. KENNEDY,  
House of Representatives,  
Washington, DC.

Hon. JIM RAMSTAD,  
House of Representatives,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVES KENNEDY AND RAMSTAD: I am writing on behalf of the National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare to urge House Members to vote YES on your bill H.R. 1424, the Paul Wellstone Mental Health & Addiction Equity Act.

Millions of American families who face structural discrimination against the mental health and addiction treatment benefits in

their health coverage will welcome passage of this legislation. It is designed to close loopholes in the 1996 Federal parity law that has too often been evaded. By requiring group health plans that provide mental health or substance use benefits to include them without different duration limits and financial requirements, this legislation will help people with mental and addiction disorders without a costly burden on employers.

We hope that House passage of your strong bipartisan bill will spur to completion the negotiations with the Senate on a bill that can become law this year. Further delay is not acceptable.

Thank you for your leadership on this important issue.

Sincerely,

LINDA ROSENBERG, MSW, CSW,  
President and CEO.

AMERICAN SOCIETY OF  
ADDICTION MEDICINE,  
Chevy Chase, MD, March 4, 2008.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,  
Speaker of the House of Representatives,  
Washington, DC.

Hon. JOHN BOEHNER,  
Republican Leader, House of Representatives,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER PELOSI AND LEADER BOEHNER: On behalf of the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM), I am writing to express our strong support for H.R. 1424, the Paul Wellstone Mental Health and Addiction Equity Act. This landmark legislation would prohibit insurance discrimination against 80 million Americans suffering from addiction and mental illness.

ASAM's mission is to increase access to and improve the quality of addiction treatment; to educate physicians (including medical and osteopathic students), other health care providers and the public; to support research and prevention; to promote the appropriate role of the physician in the care of patients with addiction; and to establish addiction medicine as a specialty recognized by professional organizations, governments, physicians, purchasers and consumers of health care services, and the general public.

I am writing because our country cannot afford the continued burden of untreated addiction and mental illness. Over 25 million people need mental health and addiction treatment but are not receiving it and the costs are staggering. Left untreated, addiction costs Americans \$400 billion dollars each year. Moreover, 80 percent of trauma admissions in emergency departments are alcohol and drug related.

The time for the passage of parity is now. Legislation to bring full equity to mental health coverage has been introduced in the House in every Congress since the 107th session but until this year, it never received consideration in committees or on the floor despite bipartisan majority co-sponsorship. Now, H.R. 1424, introduced by Reps. PATRICK KENNEDY (D-RI) and JIM RAMSTAD (R-MN), has the support of the majority of the House with 273 co-sponsors. The bill has been favorably reported by the Ways and Means, Energy and Commerce and Education and Labor Committees. In 2007, fourteen different field hearings were held around the country and included testimony from employers and insurers. These hearings documented the need for equity in health plans for the treatment of addiction and mental illness. The record shows parity is a priority that must be passed now.

We are hopeful the House of Representatives will pass H.R. 1424 this week with a strong bipartisan majority. The American Society of Addiction Medicine stands ready to assist you toward the goal of achieving

access to treatment for addiction in health plans for all Americans.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL M. MILLER,  
President and Board Chair.

SUICIDE PREVENTION ACTION  
NETWORK USA,  
Washington, DC, March 3, 2008.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,  
Speaker, House of Representatives,  
Washington, DC.

Hon. JOHN BOEHNER,  
Minority Leader, House of Representatives,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR MADAM SPEAKER AND LEADER BOEHNER: On behalf of the Suicide Prevention Action Network USA (SPAN USA), I am writing to express our support for HR 1424, the Paul Wellstone Mental Health and Addiction Equity Act. This landmark legislation would prohibit insurance discrimination against 80 million Americans suffering from addiction and mental illness.

Our country cannot afford to wait to pass this legislation. The cost of doing nothing to help people with their mental health and addiction problems is staggering. Each year, more than 31,000 individuals die by suicide and 1.3 billion work days are lost due to mental health and substance abuse disorders, more than arthritis, stroke, heart attack and cancer combined. Moreover, workers with untreated depression cost their employers \$31 billion a year in lost productivity and workers with untreated alcoholism cost their employers \$135 billion in lost productivity each year.

The time for the passage of parity is now. Far too many individuals who complete suicide have never seen a mental health professional. Legislation to bring full equity to mental health coverage has been introduced in the House in every Congress since the 107th session but until this year, it never received consideration in committees or on the floor despite having over 218 bipartisan cosponsors. Now, the Paul Wellstone Mental Health and Addiction Equity Act (H.R. 1424), introduced by Representatives PATRICK KENNEDY (D-RI) and JIM RAMSTAD (R-MN), has the support of the majority of the House with 273 cosponsors. The bill has been favorably reported by all three committees of jurisdiction. Lastly, fourteen field hearings documenting the need for equity in health plans for the treatment of addiction and mental illness were held in 2007.

Because of the critical nature of this legislation, we support passage of H.R. 1424. SPAN USA stands ready to assist you toward the goal of achieving fairness in health plans for all Americans.

Sincerely,

JERRY REED, PH.D., M.S.W.,  
Executive Director, Suicide Prevention  
Action Network USA.

#### HONORING LORNA MULLINGS

#### HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 12, 2008

Mr. TOWNS. Madam Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Lorna Mullings, a remarkable woman who after a 13-year career in banking, pursued her real passion of nursing. So in 1986, as a new immigrant, an active church worker, a wife and mother of two small children, Lorna Mullings decided to return to school and become a Registered Nurse.

In June of 1992, she graduated from St. Joseph College with a bachelors degree in nursing.

Amid the cheers of her now teenage children, she graduated Hunter College with a double masters in nursing and public health in 2002. However, midway through pursuing her masters degree which was focusing on HIV/AIDS, she was doing course work on health disparities among developed and developing countries when "something hit home." There was a definite connection with a previous paper in her undergraduate studies in which she documented her life's goal to work among the poor people of Somalia. This was also a time of defining professional and personal dreams and because her belief in God was so strong, she knew that becoming a missionary nurse was her special calling.

With her pastor's/husband's approval, blessing, and backing, she formed the Dorcas Medical Mission in 1999. In 2000, Lorna planned and implemented the mission's first outreach to Kingston, Jamaica. Since that time, she has led 15 medical missions to nine countries, bringing free dental, medical, surgical, food and clothing to thousands of needy families worldwide. In addition to these missions, she is currently in the process of opening an orphanage in Alexandria, South Africa for the caring of children left orphaned by parents who were victims of HIV/AIDS.

Lorna Mullings has worked as a nurse for over 15 years in the areas of medical, surgical, endoscopy, recovery, psychiatry, administration and community health. Today, she works as a nurse manager at the Interfaith Medical Center, managing the pediatric and medical surgical units.

Madam Speaker, Ms. Mullings is well deserving of our respect for her humanitarian works and charitable outreach—she went on to initiate the Rugby Feeding Program, which now feeds over 70 homeless people with hot meals 4 days a week and heads the Rugby Family Services. Her compassion for the less fortunate is indeed noteworthy, and I am proud to recognize her today.

#### KATHERINE HOFFMAN

#### HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 12, 2008

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Katherine Hoffman of Trenton, Missouri. Katherine is a very special young woman who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Girl Scouts of America, and earning the most prestigious award of Girl Scout Gold Award.

Katherine has been very active with her troop, participating in many scout activities. In order to receive the prestigious Gold Award, Katherine has completed all seven requirements that promote community service, personal and spiritual growth, positive values and leadership skills.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Katherine Hoffman for her accomplishments with the Girl Scouts of America and for her efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Girl Scout Gold Award.

#### HONORING CORN BELT POWER COOPERATIVE

#### HON. TOM LATHAM

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 12, 2008

Mr. LATHAM. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Corn Belt Power Cooperative of Humboldt, Iowa, on the occasion of their 60th anniversary.

Before 1947, electric cooperatives were unable to keep up with farmers' additional need of electricity to power their homes and farms, and power companies in the cities were wary of selling electricity to rural Iowa. As a result of the increased demand, two smaller power cooperatives merged to create a partnership that could build a larger coal-fired generation, thus forming Corn Belt Power.

In the early years, Corn Belt Power was a source for electric lights, storing and preparing food in rural homes, pumping water, and bringing ease to daily farm chores. Today Corn Belt Power is a source of power for sophisticated livestock systems and computers, heat pumps and efficient heating and cooling systems for homes. Corn Belt Power has withstood many ups and downs, including the energy crisis in the 1970s, the farm crisis of the 1980s, and our need for energy efficiency today.

Corn Belt Power Cooperative of Humboldt is dedicated to benefiting rural Iowa and the agricultural community, and for this I offer them my utmost congratulations and thanks. It is an honor to represent the employees of Corn Belt Power, the board of directors, and President Donald Feldman in the U.S. Congress, and I wish them continued success in serving the people of rural Iowa.

#### PAUL WELLSTONE MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION EQUITY ACT OF 2007

SPEECH OF

#### HON. DIANA DEGETTE

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 5, 2008

Ms. DeGETTE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to have the following letters of support for H.R. 1424, the Paul Wellstone Mental Health and Addiction Equity Act of 2008, submitted for the RECORD on the floor debate of this bill.

AMERICAN CORRECTIONAL ASSOCIATION,  
Alexandria, VA, February 29, 2008.

Hon. PATRICK J. KENNEDY,  
Cannon HOB,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE KENNEDY: On behalf of the American Correctional Association and our 18,000 members I'd like to express our full support for your bill, H.R. 1424, the Paul Wellstone Mental Health and Addiction Equity Act of 2007.

The health care system in our country has neglected the mentally ill long enough and it must change. We in criminal justice and more specifically the corrections profession know first-hand the effect inadequate mental health care has on our communities. Jails and prisons have become defacto mental health hospitals wherein a high prevalence of mental health problems and addiction among inmates is common and recidivism rates are high.