



Final Rule to Implement the Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act Released

NADCP applauds new regulation stating that insurers can no longer discriminate against people suffering from addiction or mental health disorders

[Alexandria, VA ~ November 15, 2013] ~ The National Association of Drug Court Professionals is honored to join millions around the country in commending the release of the Departments of Health and Human Services, Labor and Treasury [final regulations for the Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act](#) (MHPAEA), which was passed into law in 2008. The law was named after the late Senator Paul Wellstone and Senator Pete Domenici who championed mental health issues while in Congress. Under these new rules, insurers are required to treat substance use and mental health disorders the same as they would physical conditions and chronic diseases like cancer or diabetes.

Former Congressman Jim Ramstad was a key architect of the 2008 Parity legislation and spent nearly two decades in Congress fighting for improved access to treatment for the addicted and mentally ill. The Final Rule on Parity is a major step forward in expanding access to treatment for mental disorders and chemical addiction,” he said. “As Drug Courts have proven, all the empirical data show that treatment is cost effective and saves taxpayer dollars. Working to pass Parity legislation since 1996 has been both frustrating and rewarding. But it's a cause worth the fight. With real enforcement powers and treatment categorized as an ‘essential benefit’ under the Affordable Care Act, millions of Americans should benefit from the Final Rule on Parity.”

According to the National Institutes of Health, over 57.7 million Americans suffer from a diagnosable mental health disorder. Access to equal mental health services is especially critical for returning Iraq and Afghanistan military service members, especially since over 70% of National Guardsmen and Reservists receive care in the private sector. Mental disorders currently serve as the leading cause of disability in the United States and amount to \$193 billion annually in lost earnings.

“Every American should be proud of these new regulations,” said NADCP CEO West Huddleston. “We are indebted to champions like the late Senator Paul Wellstone, former Senator Pete Domenici, and former Representatives Patrick Kennedy and Jim Ramstad who fought tooth and nail to ensure that the addicted and mentally ill in this country have the same access to care as all Americans. We are now closer than ever before to making this a reality. Thank you to all who have fought for parity and helped make this momentous day possible.”

The rule ensures that people suffering from the disease of addiction or from mental health disorders cannot be discriminated against by insurance companies and will be charged similar co-pays and deductibles as they would if they had physical ailment. It also ensures that visit limits are not more restrictive for substance abuse and mental health care, and that parity is applied to care received in residential treatment and intensive outpatient settings.

Click here to read more about the [final regulations for the Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act](#).