



September 26, 2007

The Honorable Mike B. Enzi
Committee on Health, Education,
Labor, and Pensions
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Enzi:

We are writing to commend you for your work leading to Senate passage of S. 558, the Mental Health Parity Act of 2007. As you know, the President has supported passage of mental health parity legislation that does not significantly increase health coverage costs. We appreciate the work of the Senate thus far in drafting legislation that works to eliminate disparities between mental health benefits and medical or surgical benefits provided by health plans, and we support the goal of this legislation.

However, we are concerned that competing proposals, such as H.R. 1424, could have a negative effect on the accessibility and affordability of employer-provided health benefits. These proposals would mandate coverage of a broad range of diseases and conditions and undermine current law that provides for the uniform administration of employee benefit plans made possible by ERISA. We urge you to reject any proposals that would undermine S. 558.

The Administration is committed to working with you and your colleagues in the Congress to develop mental health parity legislation offering meaningful protections to American workers and their families in a cost-effective manner. Legislation that expands the benefits available under S. 558 would reduce the accessibility and affordability of coverage for these very important benefits. We hope to continue to work with you on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Elaine L. Chao
Secretary of Labor

Michael O. Leavitt
Secretary of Health and Human
Services

CC: Chairman Edward M. Kennedy



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Chairman, Committee on Health, Education,
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