October 9, 2007

The Honorable Frank Pallone  
The Honorable Nathan Deal  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Pallone and Ranking Member Deal:

We write in joint and strong opposition to H.R. 1424, the Paul Wellstone Mental Health and Addiction Equity Act of 2007. We urge you to adopt the language of the Senate-passed parity bill, S. 558, the Mental Health Parity Act, in its stead.

We strongly oppose H.R. 1424, principally because of its broad benefit mandate, its lack of protection for medical management of benefits, provisions allowing the states to enact more extensive provisions including an alternative remedy structure, and provisions mandating out-of-network coverage.

The undersigned organizations supported the bipartisan Senate negotiations which resulted in a more balanced compromise proposal. The House bill is similar in many respects to the mental health parity bills we have previously opposed. In some respects, it is worse.

Again, we strongly oppose the House bill, H.R. 1424, and urge its defeat in the House Energy and Commerce Health Subcommittee on Wednesday. We urge your support instead for individual or substitute amendments containing the language of the Senate-passed parity bill, S. 558, the Mental Health Parity Act.

Sincerely,

National Retail Federation  
Aetna  
American Benefits Council  
U.S. Chamber of Commerce  
BlueCross BlueShield Association  
National Association of Health Underwriters  
National Association of Wholesaler-Distributors  
Society for Human Resource Management  
National Association of Manufacturers  
Retail Industry Leaders Association

cc: Members, Health Subcommittee