

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