



**American Association for
Marriage and Family Therapy**

Advancing the Professional Interests
of Marriage and Family Therapists

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April 6, 2007

The Hon. Fortney "Pete" Stark, Chairman
Attn: Sheffa Gordon
Subcommittee on Health
Committee on Ways and Means
U.S. House of Representatives
239 Cannon House Office Building
Washington DC 20515


Dear Chairman Stark:

On behalf of our 24,000 members, the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy is pleased to endorse your bill, the Medicare Mental Health Modernization Act, HR 1663. This bill would improve Medicare's mental health benefits by providing parity with physical health services and by expanding Medicare coverage of cost-effective community mental health services.

We are especially supportive of Section 302 of this bill, which would add the 50,000 nationally licensed Marriage and Family Therapists as eligible independent practitioners for mental health services under Medicare Part B. This Section would go a long way toward improving Medicare beneficiaries' access to mental health services, especially in rural and other currently under-served locales. We have detailed how this Section would be a cost-effective improvement in our statement for the Record of the Subcommittee's March 27, 2007, hearing on Mental Health and Substance Abuse Parity.

Thank you for your leadership on this bill, and let me know if we may provide any further assistance in support of it.

Sincerely,



David Bergman, JD
Director
Legal and Government Affairs