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BY FAX

March 29, 2007

The Honorable Pete Stark
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Stark:

On behalf of the more than 600 member organizations of the National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems (NAPHS) and the individuals and families that our members serve, we want to thank you for your leadership in addressing the critical issue of Medicare mental health and substance abuse parity. Every day millions of seniors and disabled are unable to receive mental illness treatment because they do not have adequate mental health coverage.

We applaud your efforts in holding a hearing on and introducing the *Medicare Mental Health Modernization Act*, H.R. 1663, which would assure that the current Medicare law that imposes limit of a 190 lifetime inpatient days in psychiatric hospitals, but has no limits for inpatient treatment of other illnesses, is changed. We appreciate you eliminating Medicare's 190 day lifetime limit to assure access to inpatient psychiatric hospital care. The legislation also changes the current Medicare law that requires a 50 percent coinsurance requirement on outpatient psychiatric services, while a coinsurance of 20 percent applies to other Part B services. Maintaining a discriminatory barrier to mental health services for Medicare patients is unacceptable. NAPHS supports modernizing Medicare mental health benefits.

Again, thank you for all you have done to improve the lives of millions of Americans with psychiatric disorders. We enthusiastically support the proposal and look forward to continuing to work with you to get this legislation passed by Congress. If you have any questions you can contact Nancy Trenti, Director of Congressional Affairs at (202) 393-6700 ext. 103 or at nancy@naphs.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Covall". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mark Covall
Executive Director