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Interim Final Rules Under the Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008

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General Comment

I am writing to support NAMI National's position on the rules under the Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008.

Health Parity for people with mental illness and addiction problems is legislation that is long overdue. Now that research has identified these illnesses as biological or bio-chemical in nature, it is time that they are looked upon a part of the human condition, with mental illnesses, they are neurological disorders caused by misfiring of the brain's neurotransmitter system. Dealing realistically and fairly with these human conditions, in addition to supporting recovery for people who have these disorders, will have great payoffs for tax payers and government entities. People in need of treatment who don't receive it, end up on our streets, in our emergency rooms, in hospitals, our jails and prisons creating untold human suffering and creating a huge financial burden on taxpayers. Access to mental health/addiction services will go far in dealing with these disorders in a humanistic, realistic and fiscally-responsible way. These are among the very few illnesses that still carry a stigma from a time when the brain and its function were not understood...with current research, access to medications and counseling, people can and do recover and can begin leading productive lives. Insurance companies have routinely discriminated against people who suffer from these devastating brain disorders. Imagine discriminating against treating for heart, lung or kidney disorders! There would be a public outcry and now it's time for a public outcry for discrimination against treatments for brain disorders. This letter is a part, albeit small, of that outcry.