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To: EBSA, E-OHPSCA - EBSA
Subject: Mental health parity

Comments regarding Regulatory Guidance USCG-2007-27022

Pg. 19157, II B specific areas 1 & 4

We are clinical psychologists who provide EEG Biofeedback treatment to individuals with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and Mood Disorders. EEG Biofeedback is an empirically validated and widely recognized effective non-medication treatment for ADHD, as well as other conditions. There are over 50 studies evaluating the effectiveness of EEG Biofeedback in the treatment of ADHD, Substance Use disorders and Autism. A recent review of this literature concluded that “EEG Biofeedback meets the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry criteria for” Clinical Guidelines “for treatment of ADHD.” This means that EEG Biofeedback meets the same criteria as medication for treating ADHD, and that EEG Biofeedback “should always be considered as an intervention for this disorder by the clinician”.

This service has been denied by Aetna, Amerigroup, Blue Cross, Cigna, Medicaid, and United Behavioral Health.

This is restriction & limitation of an effective and validated treatment for a mental health problem. The reasons given by the insurance companies for this denial fall into two categories: 1) our company does not cover Biofeedback for Mental Health problems or 2) there is not yet sufficient evidence for the efficacy of EEG Biofeedback. Thus, they are using evidence-based criteria that are far more restrictive for Mental Health services than the criteria used for Medical/Surgical services. There are many routine medical and surgical procedures which have far fewer controlled studies about their efficacy than does EEG Biofeedback. These medical and surgical procedures are generally not limited because of concerns about how many controlled studies have been performed about them.

We believe that the parity regulations, based on legal reviews of the parity statute, should require that employers and health insurance plans pay for the same range and scope of services for Behavioral Treatments as they do for Medical/Surgical benefits, and that a plan cannot be more restrictive in their managed care criteria and reviews for Mental Health and Substance Abuse disorders when compared to Medical/Surgical. Currently, plans are being more restrictive in how they review evidenced-based Mental Health and Substance Abuse Treatments when compared to Medical/Surgical treatments. This violates both the intent and letter of the parity statute. We hope that the regulations will clarify that this can not continue.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments in this important matter.

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