

May 2008

Support the Community Mental Health Services Improvement Act (H.R. 5176/S. 2182)

Overview

The Community Mental Health Services Improvement Act (CMHSIA) – introduced in the Senate (S 2182) on October 17, 2007 by Senators Jack Reed (D-RI) and Gordon H. Smith (R-OR) and introduced in the House (HR 5613) on January 29, 2008 by Representatives Gene Green (D-TX) and Timothy Murphy (R-PA) - would amend the Public Health Service Act to include provisions to co-locate primary care and specialty medical care in community-based mental health and addiction treatment organizations. In addition, the bill includes training and loan assistance programs designed to address the recruitment and retention of qualified behavioral healthcare workers, particularly in health professional shortage areas.

Specific Provisions of the CMHSIA:

- Creating a new federal grants program to support co-locating primary care/chronic care services at community mental health facilities funded at \$50 million in FY 2009 and authorized through FY 2013.
- Integrating treatment for mental health and substance abuse co-occurring disorders funded at \$14 million in FY 2009, \$20 million in FY 2010 and authorized through FY 2013.
- Improving the mental health workforce through grants for the recruitment and retention of mental health professionals funded at \$10 million in FY 2009 and authorized through FY 2013.
- Enhancing behavioral and mental health education and training program through a new grants program to establish or expand accredited programs funded at \$4 million in FY 2009 and authorized through FY 2013.
- Establishing a new \$20 million federal grants program to finance infrastructure costs for telecommunications technology supporting tele-psychiatry and patient education at community mental health facilities located in rural and other medically underserved areas.
- Requiring the Secretaries of the HHS and DVA collaborate with the Office of the National Coordinator of Health Information Technology and SAMHSA to develop and implement a plan for ensuring that various components of the National Health Information Infrastructure address mental health and substance abuse provider needs supported by \$10 million in funding in FY 2009.

- Commissioning the Institute of Medicine to complete and submit to Congress a paperwork reduction study to be completed no later than a year after enactment that evaluates the combined paperwork burden of qualified community mental health programs funded at \$550,000.
- Directing a nationwide analysis and submission of a report to Congress of the compensation structure of professional and paraprofessional mental health personnel as compared with that of other health safety net and private sector employers also funded at \$550,000.

A number of organizations, including the American Psychological Association (APA), Campaign for Mental Health Reform, Mental Health America (MHA), National Association of Community Health Centers, National Association of Counties, and National Association of County Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability Directors, and the Trust for America's Health, have joined the National Council in supporting this important legislation.

REQUEST: Sign on as a co-sponsor in support of the Community Mental Health Services Improvement Act

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