

Dear Colleague,

Please join me in signing the attached letter to Secretaries Solis, Sebelius and Geithner to urge the timely issuance of regulations to implement the *Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008* (MHPAEA). Enacted in 2008, this landmark civil rights legislation will ensure that individuals and families with mental health and substance use disorders will receive health care on par with other medical conditions covered under group health insurance. Congress included a provision requiring the issuance of regulations by October 3, 2009. Under most health insurance plans, the effective date for the Act will be January 1, 2010, with or without regulations.

Regulations from the Departments of Labor, HHS and the Treasury are crucial to avoid misinterpretation of the law and to ensure access to these critical services. It is imperative that regulations be issued according to clear Congressional intent and that concerns submitted during the public comment period be addressed including scope of services, medical management of benefits, and treatment limitations.

Senator Paul Wellstone was a dear friend to many of us and I look forward to working with you to ensure that his legacy is continued to ensure parity for mental health and substance use disorder services.

If you would like to sign on to the letter, please contact Lauren Gilchrist in my office at lauren_gilchrist@franken.senate.gov or 224-41025 by close of business on Thursday, August 6th, 2009.

Sincerely,

Al Franken
U.S. Senator

Edward M. Kennedy
U.S. Senator

Jack Reed
U.S. Senator

Sheldon Whitehouse
U.S. Senator