



## NEWS RELEASE

**CONTACT:** Carole Szpak  
202/393-6700, ext. 101  
[comm@naphs.org](mailto:comm@naphs.org)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Final Rule Governing the Federal Mental Health and Substance Use Parity Law Adds Important Health Insurance Protections for All Americans, Says NAPHS**

#### **NAPHS Applauds Progress Towards Fairness and Equity**

(November 8, 2013)...Today the U.S. Departments of Health & Human Services, Labor, and Treasury released a final rule governing the federal parity law (the *Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008*). The final rule is set to be published in the November 13, 2013, *Federal Register*.

"This final rule includes new and important protections that will benefit the millions of Americans who today live with – or who at some point in their lives may face – mental and addictive disorders," according to **Mark Covall**, president and CEO of the National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems (NAPHS). The regulations spell out that parity applies to health insurance for behavioral health care wherever it may be delivered (whether in inpatient, intermediate, or outpatient settings). "This will help to ensure that people can access critically-needed, life-saving services for mental and addictive disorders at the right time and in the right setting," he said. The regulations also require insurers to have *comparability* in management practices for behavioral and medical/surgical care.

"As an association representing behavioral healthcare organizations, professionals, and employers, the National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems applauds these important new clarifications," said Covall. "Mental health is integral to overall health, and these final regulations go a long way toward ensuring that treatment for mental and addictive conditions is on equal footing with that for all other medical conditions.

"Achieving fairness and equity for all will be a longer-term process. The final rule issued today takes major steps in that direction," said Covall. "The final rule is a victory for behavioral health and an important tool for ensuring accountability. The further clarifications in the final rule are an excellent foundation on which to build and move forward. Ending discrimination is a process that will require our ongoing attention. Just as the parity law has enabled progress in employer-based insurance, federal plans such as Medicare and Medicaid should also have equal coverage. We are committed to working with Congress to extend these protections to all Americans."

Enforcement of the law and regulations will also be important going forward. "There must be accountability or the promise of the law won't be fulfilled," said Covall.

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NAPHS advocates for behavioral health and represents provider systems that are committed to the delivery of responsive, accountable, and clinically effective prevention, treatment, and care for children, adolescents, adults, and older adults with mental and substance use disorders. NAPHS members are behavioral healthcare provider organizations that own or manage more than 700 psychiatric hospitals, general hospital psychiatric and addiction treatment units and behavioral healthcare divisions, residential treatment facilities, youth services organizations, and extensive outpatient networks. The association was founded in 1933.