

Connecticut Psychiatric Society

*District Branch
American Psychiatric
Association, Inc.*

Statement in Support of

Senate Bill 203 - An Act Concerning Full Payment to Medical Assistance Providers for Services Provided to Dually Eligible Patients

Human Services Committee

February 6, 2007

This statement is being submitted on behalf the members of the Connecticut Psychiatric Society in support of Senate Bill 203. This bill would ensure fair reimbursement to physicians for services rendered to persons covered by Medicaid and Medicare.

In 1999, as part of Public Act 99-284, the General Assembly passed mental health parity, which helps to ensure access to mental health treatment for many Connecticut citizens. While mental health parity was a great step, it helps only those with private insurance. Failure to cover the coinsurance and deductibles for patients with mental illness who are recipients of both Medicare and Medicaid is a serious matter, because the Medicare reimbursement rate for outpatient psychiatric services is 50% in contrast to 80% for other outpatient health services. This is clearly a discriminatory aspect of Medicare policy, but the gap can be partially funded by the Medicaid payment of the Medicare part B crossover claim.

Psychiatrists do not willingly turn away patients in need, as we have fought long and hard for recognition that mental illness is treatable and curable. It is ironic that at the same time such recognition was achieved through the passage of parity, the neediest patients, those who are poor, elderly, and mentally ill, must suffer from reduced access to mental health services.

We strongly urge this Committee to support Senate Bill 203.

**For more information, please call:
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