



THE CONNECTICUT PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION, INC.

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January 31, 2007

Representative Peggy Sayers
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Members of Public Health Committee

Madame Chairwomen and Distinguished Members of the Public Health Committee:

RE: *SB 001, An Act Increasing Access to Affordable, Quality Healthcare.*

We urge you to include mental health services in the foundation of this or any healthcare reform that is considered during this 2007 legislative session. Inclusion of mental health services will inevitably improve the quality of Connecticut's healthcare system, reduce medical utilization, and offset the cost of medical care.

In the last several years, it has been well-documented that:

- A great percentage of visits to medical doctors are related to ailments that are significantly affected by psychological and behavioral factors.
- Persons with untreated mental health problems visit medical doctors far more frequently than those who receive mental health treatment.
- Persons with severe or chronic illnesses (either mental or physical) decrease medical utilization for up to two years after mental health treatment.
- Mental health costs remain a small percentage of total healthcare costs.

Mental or behavioral health care is preventative health care. The Connecticut Psychological Association urges you to make mental health services an integral part of Connecticut's health care reform in 2007.

Sincerely,

Barbara S. Bunk, Ph.D.
Co-Chair Legislative Committee