



CONNECTICUT
ASSOCIATION
of **NONPROFITS**

...to serve, strengthen
and support Connecticut's
nonprofit community.

FTR

**Testimony before the Insurance & Real Estate Committee
2.10.11**

**In support of
SB 877, AAC Mental Health Parity**

Good afternoon Senator Crisco, Representative Megna and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony. Connecticut Association of Nonprofits (CT Nonprofits) is the largest membership organization in Connecticut dedicated exclusively to working with nonprofits in Connecticut. We represent over 500 nonprofits, approximately 100 of which provide behavioral health services on the state's behalf.

CT Nonprofits supports SB 877 and urges the Committee's passage of the bill. This bill will simply bring Connecticut into compliance with the new federal mental health parity law and ensure the state the ability to enforce it. While Connecticut already has a strong mental health parity law that benefits consumers with individual and group health insurance plans regardless of size, the new federal law benefits those in large self-insured plans, large group health insurance plans, Medicaid managed care plans, and the State Children's Health Insurance Program (HUSKY B).

Prior to enacting the parity laws, most insurance plans put arbitrary and unequal limits and conditions on mental health treatment. These arbitrary limits and discriminatory practices cost more in the long run, harmed lives, and put many families into unfair financial hardship and even bankruptcy. The Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008 put an end to health insurance benefits inequity between mental health/substance use disorders and medical/surgical benefits for group health plans. The ability to access equal coverage for mental health and addiction care will help people receive needed treatment and often results in savings in other healthcare services, such as cost savings from decreased visits to primary care doctors or emergency rooms.

Behavioral health providers across the state dedicate themselves to improving the health and well-being of Connecticut residents needing mental health and addiction treatment. These individuals deserve to receive adequate and affordable coverage for their care. Providers, advocates and consumers have worked tirelessly to achieve the critical protections afforded by mental health parity laws and we must ensure that they are implemented and enforced appropriately.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

For questions, please contact Liza Andrews, Public Policy Director, at landrews@ctnonprofits.org or (860) 525-5080.