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March 13, 2018

Insurance and Real Estate Committee  
Connecticut General Assembly  
Legislative Office Building, Room 2800  
Hartford, CT 06106

RE: SB 384, An Act Concerning Mental Health Parity, Data Reported Managed Care Organizations and The All-Payer Claims Database

Dear Members of the Committee:

The National Council for Behavioral Health, the unifying voice of America's health care organizations that deliver mental health and addictions treatment and services, would like to express its strong support for SB 384.

Since the enactment of the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008, the National Council has been a driving force nationally in assuring that all health plans cover behavioral health services at parity with medical and surgical treatment. SB 384, which facilitates implementation of the federal parity law and strengthens parity provisions within Connecticut law, is an important measure in helping to expand access to comprehensive mental health and addiction treatment benefits to people in Connecticut.

Parity laws require health insurers that offer mental health and addiction benefits to do so on par with medical and surgical benefits, preventing them from applying financial requirements and treatment limitations for mental health and addiction that are more restrictive. The federal parity law applies to most commercial and all Medicaid managed care plans in the U.S. State insurance commissioners and Medicaid Directors have the authority to enforce the parity law, yet individuals and their employers are still paying for insurance coverage for mental health and addiction care that is far more restrictive than insurance coverage of other medical care.

While Connecticut has been a leader in enacting state parity legislation, there remains a need for more stringent enforcement, reporting, and data collection. SB 384 would strengthen mental health parity in the state by expanding mental health parity requirements, requiring health insurers to report additional data to the Connecticut Insurance Department, and requiring the Connecticut Health Insurance Exchange to submit a report to the General Assembly regarding the all-payer claims database. It would strengthen parity provisions in the existing Connecticut law, help facilitate the implementation and enforcement of the federal parity law, and ensure that people with mental health and substance use disorders receive the benefits that they and their employers are paying for through their health insurance.

Thank you for your consideration and foresight in addressing this issue and helping people with mental health and substance use disorders receive the services they need.

Sincerely yours,

Chuck Ingoglia  
Senior Vice President, Public Policy & Practice Improvement