



Members of CT General Assembly's Insurance and Real Estate Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 2800
Hartford, CT 06106

March 11, 2018

Re: SB 384

Dear Committee Members:

Mental Health America (MHA), with more than 200 affiliates in 40 states is the county's leading community-based nonprofit dedicated to addressing the needs of those living with mental illness and to promoting the overall mental health of all Americans. MHA traces its roots to the Connecticut Society for Mental Hygiene (now Mental Health Connecticut) founded in 1908, and its formation a year later of the National Committee for Mental Hygiene, which is now known as Mental Health America. MHA is driven by a commitment to promote mental health as a critical part of overall wellness, including prevention services for all, early identification and intervention for those at risk, integrated care, services, and supports for those who need it, with recovery as the goal.

Connecticut historically has had an outsized influence on national mental health policy. It was the first state to enact a parity law, even before there was any type of federal parity legislation. However, even with its first in the nation parity law, there is a need to for more stringent enforcement, reporting, and data collection. A recent report completed by Milliman, commissioned by the Mental Health Treatment and Research Institute, indicates that Connecticut might be exhibiting parity violations. The Milliman Report shows that Connecticut citizens who were seeking behavioral health care had a 10.5 times higher rate of having to go out of network than those looking for primary care providers. This was the highest rate in the nation¹

Mental Health America is in strong support of SB 384, which will expand mental health parity requirements; require health carriers to report additional data to the Insurance Department; and require that the Connecticut Health Insurance Exchange submit a report to the General Assembly regarding the all-payer claims database. Without this legislation there's no way to know if there is really parity in Connecticut, a state that has always served as a model for behavioral health policy.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions at dplotnick@mentalhealthamerica.net.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Debbie F. Plotnick", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Debbie F. Plotnick, MSS, MSLP
Vice President for Mental Health and Systems Advocacy

¹ <http://www.milliman.com/uploadedFiles/insight/2017/NQTLDisparityAnalysis.pdf>