



Action Alert: *Wisconsin Parity Act*

The Wisconsin Assembly Committee on Health and Healthcare Reform will hold an Executive Session on the *Wisconsin Mental Health and Substance Abuse Parity Act (SB-362/AB-512)* at **10:30 a.m. Thursday, Dec. 17 in Room 417 North (GAR Hall) of the state Capitol building.** Committee members will vote on passage of the legislation out of this committee and on to the full Assembly for its consideration.

The *Wisconsin Parity Act* is an important bill that will require group health plans in Wisconsin to provide mental health and substance abuse disorder benefits at parity levels. This new law will increase treatment for hundreds of thousands of people in Wisconsin, saving lives and lowering costs. For more information on the legislation, visit www.ParityForWisconsin.org.

Action Requested

Call or email your Wisconsin representative on the Assembly Committee on Health and Healthcare Reform TODAY and ask them to vote to pass the *Wisconsin Parity Act* onto the floor. If you don't know who your representative is, visit www.legis.wisconsin.gov/w3asp/waml/waml.aspx



Suggested Message to Representatives

These are just suggestions—it's best to use your own words and experiences:

I'm writing as a constituent to ask that you vote to pass the *Wisconsin Mental Health and Substance Abuse Parity Act (SB-362/AB-512)* out of the Assembly Committee on Health and Healthcare Reform and onto the full Assembly.

The *Wisconsin Parity Act* will provide equitable mental health and addiction treatment benefits for many of the 700,000 Wisconsin residents left uncovered by the federal *Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008*.

Scientific evidence has shown addiction to be a chronic, relapse-prone disease, and mental illnesses to be serious medical illnesses that disrupt the well-being and health of individuals in every age, income and ethnic group. Federally sponsored research has repeatedly confirmed the efficacy and cost-effectiveness of treatment to counteract the powerful effects of addiction and mental illness to help patients regain control of their lives.

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A March 4, 2008 study by the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) of the law that became the *Wellstone-Domenici Act*—the most recent, authoritative, independent, expert analysis of parity’s economic impact on private-sector employers—found that mental health and addiction parity would increase costs by less than one half of one percent of premium.

Wisconsin’s small businesses cannot afford the costs of untreated mental illness and addiction—for a minimal investment, parity will save billions of dollars in reduced sick days, increased worker productivity and decreased health care costs.

For these reasons I ask that you vote to pass the *Wisconsin Parity Act* out of committee.

Assembly Committee on Health and Healthcare Reform

Members in bold have already signed on as co-sponsors to the legislation. If you contact them, please thank them for their support of this important legislation.

- **Rep. Jon Richards** (D-Milwaukee), rep.richards@legis.wisconsin.gov; (608) 266-3404
- **Rep. Chuck Benedict** (D-Beloit), rep.benedict@legis.wisconsin.gov; (608) 266-9967
- **Rep. Penny Bernard Schaber** (D-Appleton), rep.BernardSchaber@legis.wisconsin.gov; (608) 266-3070
- **Rep. Sandy Pasch** (D-Whitefish Bay), rep.pasch@legis.wisconsin.gov; (608) 266-7671. Rep. Pasch is the lead sponsor of the bill. If you contact her, please be sure to thank her for her important leadership.
- **Rep. Kelda Helen Roys** (D-Madison), rep.roys@legis.wisconsin.gov; (608) 266-5340
- **Rep. Amy Sue Vruwink** (D-Milladore), rep.vruwink@legis.wisconsin.gov; (608) 266-8366
- Rep. Donna Seidel (D-Wausau), rep.seidel@legis.wisconsin.gov; (608) 266-0654
- Rep. Jennifer Shilling (D-LaCrosse), rep.shilling@legis.wisconsin.gov; (608) 266-5680

- Rep. John Nygren (R-Marinette), rep.nygren@legis.wisconsin.gov; (608) 266-2343
- Rep. Kitty Rhoades (R-Hudson), rep.rhoades@legis.wisconsin.gov; (608) 266-1526
- Rep. Jeff Stone (R-Greendale), rep.stone@legis.wisconsin.gov; (608) 266-8590
- Rep. Pat Strachota (R-West Bend), rep.strachota@legis.wisconsin.gov; (608) 264-8486
- Rep. Leah Vukmir (R-Wauwatosa), rep.vukmir@legis.wisconsin.gov; (608) 266-9180