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Request for Information for Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008

Comment On: IRS-2009-0008-0001

Request for Information Regarding the Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008

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Comment on FR Doc # E9-09629

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General Comment

Thank you for passage of this very important bill. I am a recovering alcohol and drug addict. I have been sober for 8 1/2 years and am currently working as an alcohol and drug counselor in Memphis, TN. I am also working towards a Masters degree in Rehabilitation which will give me the additional knowledge of mental health counseling as well as counseling people with mental and physical disabilities. Having been on both sides of addiction and mental illness, I am also a person with bipolar disorder, I can fully appreciate the enormity of the potential of this bill.

I have seen many people who have not been able to get the proper medical attention they need to allow them to address their mental health and addiction issues. Most people that have the disease of addiction also suffer from a mental illness. There are not enough facilities to help the people with the very basic needs such as counseling and medication. This bill puts mental health and addiction on the same level as other illnesses which has been delayed for too long, but what can you in Congress do about it now? Prevention and treatment. Reduce the demand for drugs through education and treatment. Allow people that need

counseling to get it. Open up more mental health facilities and have the insurance companies pay for them or at least a part of them. They will reap the benefits because the people utilizing these types of facilities will need less of the more expensive emergency or crisis management care. If a person is in a mental health counseling program for dual addiction he has a better chance of avoiding costly emergency room visits as well as reducing the health risks associated with long term alcohol and drug abuse which includes automobile and other accidents that are a direct result of alcohol and drug use as well as mental health issues such as severe depression, bipolar disorder and psychosis.

I thank you for your time. You have a very important job ahead of you. If I can be of further assistance, please contact me.