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From: svalente@eastern.edu [<mailto:svalente@eastern.edu>]

Sent: Saturday, April 24, 2010 5:59 PM

To: EBSA, E-OHPSCA - EBSA

Subject: Comment in support of RIN 1210-AB30

April 24, 2010

I am writing to support the interim final rule under the Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008 (RIN 1210-AB30).

I support the strong rule that would forbid insurance companies from charging higher copayments, deductibles, and other out-of-pocket expenses for mental health treatment than they would for other physical health care.

As a Crisis Intervention Specialist, I see individuals every day who, because of higher copays and the like, are unable to afford mental health treatment, despite the fact that they have insurance. Often, because they have been unable to pay, their mental health needs have gone unmet and untreated, until they arrive on my doorstep, so to speak. It is not unusual that these people are now suicidal and I am left with no choice but to hospitalize them, when out-patient therapy would have been all that was needed to address the issue if they had been able to afford the treatment when the problem first presented itself. I urge you to take steps to ensure that these types of situations are no longer so common.

Thank you for ensuring that mental health care and physical health care coverage are included in a single deductible.

Sincerely,

Sabrina Valente
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Littlestown, PA 17340