

PUBLIC SUBMISSION

As of: May 28, 2009 Tracking No. 809acaef Comments Due: May 28, 2009

Docket: IRS-2009-0008

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

Document: IRS-2009-0008-0008

Comment on FR Doc # E9-09629

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General Comment

Comments regarding Regulatory Guidance USCG-2007-27022
page 19157, II B specific areas 1 and 4

I know of many clinical psychologists who provides EEG biofeedback treatment to individuals with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and Mood Disorders. EEG biofeedback is an empirically validated and widely recognized effective non-medication treatment for ADHD, as well as other conditions. There are over 50 studies evaluating the effectiveness of EEG biofeedback in the treatment of ADHD, Substance Use disorders and Autism. A recent review of this literature concluded "EEG biofeedback meets the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry criteria for" Clinical Guidelines "for treatment of ADHD." This means that EEG biofeedback meets the same criteria as medication for treating ADHD, and that EEG biofeedback "should always be considered as an intervention for this disorder by the clinician".

This service has been denied by Georgia Medicaid, Aetna, United Behavioral Health, Blue Cross, Cigna, and Amerigroup.

This is limitation of an effective and validated treatment for a mental health problem. The reasons given by the insurance companies for this denial fell into two categories: 1) our company does not cover biofeedback for Mental Health problems or 2) there is not yet sufficient evidence for the efficacy of EEG biofeedback. As such, they are using evidence-based criteria that are far more

restrictive for mental health services than the criteria which are used for medical/surgical services. There are many routine medical and surgical procedures which have far fewer controlled studies about their efficacy than does EEG biofeedback. These medical and surgical procedures are generally not limited because of concerns about how many controlled studies have been performed about them.

We believe that the parity regulations, based on legal reviews of the parity statute should require that employers and plans pay for the same range and scope of services for Behavioral Treatments as they do for Med Surg benefits and that a plan cannot be more restrictive in their managed care criteria and reviews for MH and SA disorders when compared to Med Surg. Today plans are being more restrictive in how they review evidenced-based Mental Health and Substance Abuse Treatments when compared to Med Surg treatments. This violates both the intent and letter of the parity statute and we hope that the regulations will clarify that this can't continue.

It is well documented that eighty to ninety percent of the health concerns for which people seek the services of their primary care provider are stress related. I have over the last thirty years provided behavioral health care and training in stress management to hundreds, even thousands of patients for emotional, behavioral and physical conditions that were stress related and many times averted the need for further more extensive treatment, including disasters such as suicides, etc. The savings in terms of additional health care costs that are achieved by behavioral health care provider I'm sure easily total in the millions of dollars, if not billions, annually. The payment we receive for our services by governmental programs such as Medicare is not only lacking in parity with medical practitioners, its insulting. Payment for behavioral care services is not on par with general medical care anywhere in the industry and it's definitely time for a change!!