

PUBLIC SUBMISSION

As of: May 28, 2009
Received: May 28, 2009
Status: DoNotPost
Tracking No. 809bc267
Comments Due: May 28, 2009
Submission Type: Web

Docket: EBSA-2009-0010

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

Comment On: EBSA-2009-0010-0001

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

Document: EBSA-2009-0010-DRAFT-0234

Comment on FR Doc # E9-9629

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General Comment

CMS-4140-NC

Comments regarding Regulatory Guidance USCG-2007-27022

page 19157, II B specific areas 1 and 4

I am a graduate Psychology student, who is learning about EEG biofeedback treatment to individuals with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and Mood Disorders. EEG biofeedback is an empirically validated and widely recognized, effective, non-addictive and non-invasive 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.

I believe that the parity regulations, based on legal reviews of the parity statute, should require that employers and insurance 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 its managed care criteria and reviews for Mental Health and Substance Abuse 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. This cannot continue.

As stated above, I call for and request that the regulations be changed to require insurers and employers pay for the same range and scope of services for Behavioral Treatments, as they do for Med Surg benefits, especially non-addictive and non-invasive treatments such as EEG Biofeedback. I further call for and request that a plan cannot be more restrictive in its managed care criteria and reviews for Mental Health and Substance Abuse disorders and treatment, than it is for Med Surg treatments.

Sincerely,

Cheryn English