

Press Release

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NASMHPD Praises the Release of Final Parity Rule

The members and staff of the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors (NASMHPD) praise the release of the final parity rule. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Labor, and Treasury jointly issued a final regulation that implements the [Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008 \(MHPAEA\)](#), which ensures that individual and group health plans cannot charge higher copayments and deductibles or set limits on visits to behavioral health providers than what is found for medical/surgical benefits. For example, if MCOs and health insurers offer “post-acute care services” or “home health care,” then they must cover residential and outpatient services for mental health and substance abuse. Second, geographic and facility-typed limits would have to be comparable to medical/surgical benefits.

“This historical piece of regulation will open the door for millions of people trying to access crucial behavioral health services that may have been previously denied coverage or paid a higher copayment for these services,” adds NASMHPD Executive Director, Dr. Robert W. Glover.

The final regulation applies to individual and group health plan years beginning on or after July 1, 2014; the regulation doesn’t apply to Medicare or Medicaid managed care or alternative benefit Medicaid plans. In addition, the final rule clarifies that States have primary enforcement authority over health insurance issuers, and States will be the primary means of enforcing the implementation of MHPAEA.

NASMHPD represents state executives responsible for the \$37.6 billion public mental health service delivery system serving over 7.1 million people annually in all 50 states, four territories and the District of Columbia.