



# The Medicare Mental Health Inpatient Equity Act

117<sup>th</sup> Congress

House Sponsors: Reps. Paul Tonko (D-NY) & Bill Huizenga (R-MI)

Senate Sponsors: Sens. Susan Collins (R-ME) & Tina Smith (D-MN)

*"Through the Mental Health Parity Act, we recognize that all illnesses, including those that affect the brain, should have equal coverage in our nation."*

❖ Paul Tonko

## Access to mental health care for seniors is critical

- At least **1 in 4** seniors experience some mental disorder, such as depression, anxiety, or dementia.
- Due to population aging, the number of seniors with mental illness is expected to double by 2030.
- Treating depression in older adults is important since it impacts many physical conditions including heart disease, stroke, and diabetes.
- About **26 percent of all Medicare beneficiaries** experience some sort of mental disorder, according to estimates by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH).
- According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), the U.S. loses approximately **\$100 billion annually from lost productivity due to untreated mental illness.**

## Yet stigma continues to prevent lifesaving care

- Today, despite the enactment of the landmark Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008, Medicare continues to discriminate against seniors with mental illnesses.
- Medicare has a 190-day **lifetime limit** on inpatient psychiatric hospital services, regardless of the patients' needs.
  - This limit does not apply to psychiatric units in general hospitals and **there is no such lifetime limit for any other Medicare specialty inpatient hospital service.**
- In addition to impacting seniors, this arbitrary limit disproportionately harms individuals who get Medicare coverage earlier in life due to disability, many of whom are managing mental illness.

## Congress Can Make a Difference!

### The Medicare Mental Health Inpatient Equity Act of 2021

- ❖ Brings us closer to mental health parity by **eliminating the 190-day lifetime limit on inpatient psychiatric hospital services under the Medicare Program.**
- ❖ Removes harmful stigma surrounding mental illness while bringing Medicare policy in line with private insurance policies that have long since removed this unjust, antiquated limit.
- ❖ Increases access for the seriously ill, improves continuity of care for many of America's seniors and increases cost effectiveness of Medicare.

*Congress has a duty to ensure our seniors are given the mental health care and support they need.  
Now is the time to act!*

Connect with Congressman Paul Tonko on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram: @RepPaulTonko