



The Medicare Mental Health Inpatient Equity Act

119th Congress

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

Too often we see the harmful stigma surrounding mental illness impede Americans from receiving the care they need and deserve, with dire consequences"

❖ Paul Tonko

Access to mental health care for seniors is critical

- At least **14 percent of seniors** experience some form of mental illness, such as depression, anxiety, or dementia.
- As the population ages, the number of seniors with mental illness is expected to double by 2030.
- Mental illness impacts physical condition, increasing risks of heart disease, stroke, and diabetes in seniors.
- About **25 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), mental illness costs the global economy approximately **\$1 trillion annually from lost productivity**.

Yet stigma prevents 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** for **inpatient psychiatric hospital services**, regardless of patients' needs.
 - This limit does not apply to psychiatric units in general hospitals and **there are no lifetime limits for any other specialty inpatient hospital service**.
- This arbitrary limit disproportionately harms seniors and individuals who receive Medicare coverage earlier in life due to disability, many of whom are managing mental illness.
- MedPac, an independent congressional agency that advises on Medicare, released a March 2025 report recommending that Congress eliminate this outdated limit.

Congress Can Make a Difference!

The Medicare Mental Health Inpatient Equity Act of 2025

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

Congress has a duty to ensure our seniors are given the mental health care and support they need.

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