

## COALITION FOR WHOLE HEALTH

September 9, 2009

The Honorable Harry Reid  
Majority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Minority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Boehner  
Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Leader Reid, Leader McConnell, Speaker Pelosi, and Leader Boehner,

On behalf of the Coalition for Whole Health, the undersigned organizations express our strong support for passage of comprehensive healthcare reform legislation before the end of the year. Reform presents a unique opportunity to significantly expand health coverage, increase access to necessary care, improve public health and reduce costs. To accomplish these goals, it is imperative full and equitable addiction and mental illness prevention, treatment and recovery supports be part of any healthcare reform proposals that are developed and enacted by Congress.

Millions of Americans suffer from untreated mental illness and/or addiction to alcohol and other drugs. Medical experts agree that addiction and mental illnesses are chronic diseases that can be prevented and treated effectively. Unfortunately, less than half of the 15 million adults with serious mental illness received treatment or counseling for a mental health problem and only 18 percent of the 22.6 million people in need of help for an alcohol and/or drug use problem received any form of treatment in the past year.

We are very encouraged that the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee and the House Tri-Committee bills include addiction and mental health in the minimum benefits package and apply the Wellstone Domenici parity standard to all qualified health plans. We are also encouraged by provisions in some bills to expand prevention and treatment services and authorize workforce development grants for the mental health and substance use disorder systems. It is critical that all these provisions be included in healthcare reform to ensure that individuals and their families have better coverage and access to mental health and substance use disorder prevention and treatment services, improving the health and quality of life for millions of Americans.

Fully and equitably including mental health and addiction prevention, treatment and recovery support services and providers in national healthcare reform will significantly lower healthcare costs. For example:

- According to the Agency for Health Research Quality (AHRQ), 25 percent of the admissions to our nation's hospitals are directly related to mental illness and/or substance use disorders.

- Inpatient, emergency room, and total healthcare costs decline by 39 percent, 35 percent, and 26 percent respectively after patients who suffer from alcohol or drug addiction receive treatment. For these patients, integrating medical and substance use disorder treatment services results in decreases in hospitalization rates, fewer days of inpatient treatment, and fewer emergency room visits. As a result, total medical costs per patient per month are more than halved, from \$431 to \$200.
- A Washington State study found that costs for disabled Medicaid beneficiaries receiving outpatient mental health treatment were lowered by about \$105 per member per month in the first follow-up year and \$126 per member per month in the second year, compared to clients with mental illness who did not receive mental health treatment. Medicaid beneficiaries who received substance use disorder treatment had medical costs that were \$4,500 less over a five-year follow-up period than those of the average untreated client.
- Untreated substance use disorders and mental illnesses can aggravate or mask symptoms of other medical conditions and complicate the effectiveness of treatment for co-occurring chronic illnesses, such as diabetes and heart disease.

The success of national healthcare reform will be judged on its ability to provide essential services to all Americans, improve overall health outcomes, and control costs. When substance use disorders and mental health issues are addressed and treated as the preventable, treatable chronic diseases they are, systems reap substantial cost savings while dramatically improving health. For these reasons, it is essential that the full continuum of mental health and addiction prevention, treatment, and recovery services are effectively incorporated into healthcare reform.

Thank you again for your leadership. The Coalition for Whole Health looks forward to working with you and your staff as healthcare reform moves forward. If we can serve as a resource, please do not hesitate to contact Gabrielle de la Gueronniere or Dan Belnap at 202-544-5478, Carol McDaid at 202-737-8168, or Holly Merbaum at 202-737-7393.

Sincerely,

### **National Organizations**

AIDS Action Council  
 Alliance for Children and Families  
 American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry (AAAP)  
 American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP)  
 American Association for the Treatment of Opioid Dependence (AATOD)  
 American Association of Children's Residential Centers  
 American Association of Pastoral Counselors  
 American Association of Suicidology  
 American Dance Therapy Association  
 American Group Psychotherapy Association  
 American Jail Association

American Nurses Association  
American Occupational Therapy Association  
American Probation and Parole Association  
American Psychoanalytic Association  
American Psychological Association  
American Public Health Association  
American Society of Addiction Medicine  
Anxiety Disorders Association of America  
Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare  
Association for Medical Education and Research in Substance Abuse (AMERSA)  
Association for the Advancement of Psychology  
Association of Recovery Schools  
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law  
Betty Ford Center  
Betty Ford Institute  
Black Psychiatrists of America, Inc  
Bradford Health Services  
Campaign for Mental Health Reform  
Carnevale Foundation  
Caron Treatment Centers  
Carter Center Mental Health Program  
Center for Integrated Behavioral Health Policy, Department of Health Policy, George Washington University Medical Center  
Child Welfare League of America  
Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (CHADD)  
Clinical Social Work Association  
Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA)  
Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA)  
Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy and Action  
Entertainment Industries Council  
Ethan King Foundation  
Faces and Voices of Recovery  
Friends of SAMHSA  
Hazelden Foundation  
Hepatitis C Association  
International Certification and Reciprocity Consortium (IC&RC)  
International CURE  
Justice Policy Institute  
Legal Action Center  
McShin Foundation  
Mental Health America  
NAACP  
NAADAC-The Association for Addiction Professionals  
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd  
National African American Drug Policy Coalition, Inc  
National Alliance on Mental Illness

National Alliance to End Homelessness  
National Association for Children of Alcoholics  
National Association for Rural Mental Health  
National Association of Addiction Treatment Providers  
National Association of Drug Court Professionals  
National Association of Social Workers  
National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors (NASADAD)  
National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors (NASMHPD)  
National Association on Alcohol, Drugs and Disability  
National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare  
National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc (NCADD)  
National Council on Problem Gambling  
National Family Partnership  
National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health  
National Foundation for Mental Health  
National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty  
National Mental Health Awareness Campaign (NMHAC)  
National Policy and Advocacy Council on Homelessness  
National Student Assistance Association  
NIATx  
North American Association of Masters in Psychology  
Partnership for a Drug-Free America  
Physicians and Lawyers for National Drug Policy (PLNDP)  
State Associations of Addiction Services  
Strategic Applications International, LLC  
Suicide Awareness Voices of Education  
Suicide Prevention Action Network USA, a division of AFSP  
The National Family Partnership  
Therapeutic Communities of America  
Treatment Research Institute  
Trichotillomania Learning Center  
Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations  
United Methodist Church-General Board of Church and Society  
United Neighborhood Centers of America  
US Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association (USPRA)  
Watershed Addiction Treatment Centers  
Wellstone Action  
Witness Justice

### **State and Local Organizations**

622 Communities Partnership, Inc  
A New PATH (Parents for Addiction Treatment & Healing)  
Addiction Resource Council, Inc  
Advocates for Recovery – Colorado

Alcohol & Addictions Resource Center  
Alcohol & Drug Council of Middle Tennessee  
Alcohol and Drug Abuse Council For South Louisiana  
Alcohol and Drug Abuse Council of Delaware County, Inc  
Alcohol and Substance Abuse Council of Jefferson County, Inc  
Alcohol/Drug Council of North Carolina  
Alcoholism & Drug Abuse Council of Orange County  
Alcoholism Council of New York, Inc  
Alcoholism Council of the Cincinnati Area, NCADD  
Alliance for Substance Abuse Prevention  
ANUVIA Prevention and Recovery Center  
Arapahoe House, Inc of Colorado  
Association of Alcoholism & Addictions Programs in Washington State  
Association of Persons Affected By Addiction  
Atlantic Prevention Resources, Inc  
Boston Alcohol and Substance Abuse Programs, Inc  
Bucks County Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc  
Burke Council on Alcoholism and Chemical Dependency, Inc  
California Association of Addiction Recovery Resources (CAARR)  
California Association of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counselors (CAADAC)  
California Association of Alcohol and Drug Program Executives  
California Foundation for the Advancement of Addiction Professionals (CFAAP)  
Camden County Council on Alcoholism & Drug Abuse, Inc  
Center of Health Care, Bexar County Texas  
Central Valley Recovery Services, Inc  
CHADD of Grand Rapids, Michigan-Chapter 596  
Chautauqua Alcoholism & Substance Abuse Council, Inc  
Chestnut Health Systems  
Clinical Social Work Guild 49  
Colorado Association of Alcohol and Drug Service Providers  
Community Alliance on Prisons  
Community Prevention Resources of Warren County, Inc  
Compass Health Care  
Council on Addiction Prevention and Education of Dutchess County, Inc  
Council on Addiction Recovery Services, Inc  
Council on Alcoholism & Drug Abuse  
Council on Alcoholism & Drug Abuse of Northwest Louisiana  
Council on Alcoholism and Other Chemical Dependencies of the Finger Lakes  
Council on Chemical Abuse, Inc  
Council on Substance Abuse- NCADD  
Councils on Addiction of New York State  
County Alcohol & Drug Program Administrators Association of California  
CT Association of Nonprofits  
Day One  
De Paul Treatment Centers, Portland, OR

DePaul's National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence-Rochester Area (a long time affiliate of NCADD, Inc)  
Drug and Alcohol Service Providers Organization of Pennsylvania  
Drug and Alcohol Treatment Association of Rhode Island  
Drug Policy Forum of Hawaii  
El Paso Alliance  
Employee & Family Resources  
Erie County Council for the Prevention of Alcohol and Substance Abuse  
Face It! Sioux Falls  
Faces and Voices of Recovery SC  
Feeling Blue Suicide Prevention Council  
Florida Alcohol and Drug Abuse Association  
Focus On Community  
Friends of Recovery- Vermont (FOR-VT)  
G.L.A.D. House, Inc  
Gateway Foundation, Inc  
H Group  
Harbor Hall, Inc  
Hepatitis Support Network of Hawaii  
HepCats, Oahu's Hepatitis B & C Support Group  
HFM Prevention Council  
HIV & Hepatitis Co-Infection Program  
Hunterdon Prevention Resources  
Illinois Alcoholism and Drug Dependence Association (IADDA)  
Impact Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services  
Informed Families /The Florida Family Partnership  
Join Together Northern Nevada  
Kent County Michigan Mental Health Parity Advocacy Coalition  
Kingdom Recovery Center, St. Johnsbury, VT  
Long Island Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc  
Madison County Council on Alcoholism & Substance Abuse, Inc  
Maine Association of Substance Abuse Programs  
Massage Therapy & Acupressure Healing Arts Center  
Mental Health and Substance Abuse Corporations of Massachusetts, Inc  
Mental Health Association of DC  
Methadone Support Org. (MSO)  
Michigan Association of Licensed Substance Abuse Organizations  
Micronesia Outreach Healthcare Program  
Midwestern Connecticut Council on Alcoholism  
Minnesota Association of Resources for Recovery and Chemical Health (MARRCH)  
MOAR—Massachusetts Organization for Addiction Recovery  
Mohawk Valley Council on Alcohol/Addictions  
Morris County Prevention Is Key, Inc  
Mountain Council on Alcohol and Drug Dependence  
Mountain View Prevention Services, Inc  
National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse (NCADA), St. Louis Area

National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Central Mississippi Area, Inc  
National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, East San Gabriel & Pomona Valleys  
National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Greater Detroit Area  
National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Greater Manchester  
National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Greater Phoenix  
National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Hudson County, Inc  
National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Illinois  
National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Kansas City  
National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Long Beach Area  
National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Maryland Chapter  
National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Michigan  
National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Middlesex County  
National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, New Jersey  
National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Northeast Mississippi  
National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Northwest Florida  
National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Ohio  
National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Orange County  
National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Richmond  
National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Rochester Area  
National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Sacramento County, Inc  
National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Sacramento Region Affiliate  
National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, San Diego  
National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, San Fernando Valley, Inc  
National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Tampa Bay  
National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, South Bay Area  
National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Tulare County, Inc  
National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Westchester  
National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependencies, Putnam  
National Council on Alcoholism and Other Drug Addictions, Bay Area  
National Council on Alcoholism for Monterey County  
National Council on Alcoholism, Juneau  
NCA/Lansing Regional Area, Inc  
NCADD of Michigan  
Nevada AADAPTS  
New England Alliance for Addiction Recovery (NEAAR)  
Northpointe Council, Inc  
O'Brien House Alcohol and Drug Prevention Services  
Ohio Citizen Advocates for Chemical Dependency Prevention & Treatment  
Ohio Council of Behavioral Health and Family Services Providers  
OPERA (Oregon Prevention Education and Recovery Association)  
Palladia, Inc  
PAR-People Advocating Recovery  
Pasadena Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependency  
Passaic County Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Prevention, Inc  
Prevention Plus of Burlington County, Inc  
Prison & Outreach Ministries

Prisoner Reintegration & Family Reunification Program  
Psychotherapy & Organizational Development, LLC  
RASE Project  
Recovery Resource Council  
Recovery Resources, Inc  
Restoring Dignity, Inc  
Rhode Island Council on Alcoholism and Other Drug Dependence  
Rockland Council on Alcoholism and Other Drug Dependence, Inc  
SAARA of Virginia  
Schoharie County Council on Alcoholism and Substance Abuse, Inc  
Seaway Valley Prevention Council  
Second Genesis  
Signal Behavioral Health Network, Inc  
Sojourn House of Freeport IL  
South Dakota Council of Mental Health Centers, Inc  
South Dakota Council of Substance Abuse Directors  
South Suburban Council on Alcoholism and Substance Abuse, East Hazel Crest, IL  
Stepping Stone of San Diego  
Student Assistance Services Corp  
Substance Abuse and Addiction Recovery Alliance of Virginia  
Substance Abuse Directors Association of Alaska  
Tarzana Treatment Centers  
TASC, Inc  
The Addictions Care Center of Albany, Inc  
The Central Nebraska Council on Alcoholism  
The Council on Alcohol & Drug Abuse for Greater New Orleans  
The Council on Alcohol & Substance Abuse Prevention of Saratoga County, Inc  
The Council on Alcohol and Drugs Houston  
The Council on Alcoholism & Drug Abuse of Sullivan County, Inc/Recovery Center  
The Referral Center for Alcohol and Drug Services of Central Oklahoma  
Washington Psychiatric Society

Cc: Kathleen Sebelius, Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Gil Kerlikowske, Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy  
Nancy-Ann DeParle, Director of the White House Office for Health Reform  
Jeanne Lambrew, Deputy Director of the White House Office for Health Reform  
Rear Admiral Eric Broderick, Acting Administrator of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration  
The Honorable Richard Durbin, Majority Whip of the U.S. Senate  
The Honorable Jon Kyl, Minority Whip of the U.S. Senate  
The Honorable Steny Hoyer, Majority Leader of the U.S. House of Representatives  
The Honorable James Clyburn, Majority Whip of the U.S. House of Representatives  
The Honorable Eric Cantor, Minority Whip of the U.S. House of Representatives  
The Honorable Christopher Dodd, Acting Chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee  
The Honorable Mike Enzi, Ranking Member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee  
The Honorable Max Baucus, Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee  
The Honorable Charles Grassley, Ranking Member of the Senate Finance Committee  
The Honorable Henry A. Waxman, Chair of the House Energy and Commerce Committee  
The Honorable John Dingell, Chair Emeritus of the House Energy and Commerce Committee  
The Honorable Joe Barton, Ranking Member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee  
The Honorable Frank Pallone, Chair of the House Energy and Commerce Health Subcommittee  
The Honorable Nathan Deal, Ranking Member of the House Energy and Commerce Health Subcommittee  
The Honorable Charles Rangel, Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee  
The Honorable Dave Camp, Ranking Member of the House Ways and Means Committee  
The Honorable Wally Herger, Ranking Member of the House Ways and Means Committee  
The Honorable Fortney "Pete" Stark, Chairman of the House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Health  
The Honorable George Miller, Chair of the House Education and Labor Committee  
The Honorable Howard "Buck" McKeon, Ranking Member of the House Education and Labor Committee  
The Honorable Robert Andrews, Chair of the House Education and Labor Subcommittee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions  
The Honorable John Kline, Ranking Member of the House Education and Labor Subcommittee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions