

H.R. 1424, the Paul Wellstone Mental Health and Addiction Equity Act of 2007

- **Improves access to life-saving mental health and addiction recovery services by limiting the discriminatory barriers that keep tens of thousands of Americans from getting the help they need.**
- **Equal coverage for drug and alcohol treatment and recovery support services would require health insurers to provide coverage at the same level as for other chronic, relapsing disorders such as diabetes and hypertension. Discriminatory policies require individuals and their family members to pay higher deductibles and co-payments and receive less coverage for number of visits, days of coverage, and annual or lifetime dollar limits for treatment.**
- **Recent studies have shown that the economic benefits of treating people with addiction outweigh the costs. Researchers found that the benefits outweighed the costs seven-fold, because of increased job earnings and reduced costs related to crime and imprisonment. They also found reduced costs for emergency room visits, outpatient care and residential care.**
- **A 2006 Institute of Medicine report called for laws requiring insurers to offer the coverage that is needed for high quality, comprehensive health coverage for addiction.**
- **The use of addiction treatment paid for with employer-based health insurance has declined significantly over recent years – taxpayers are footing the bill for over 75 percent of treatment today. From 1992 to 2001, the percentage of people who used employer-based health coverage to pay for treatment dropped 23 percent.**
- **State laws which provide better protections will remain in effect and are not preempted by H.R. 1424**
- **Strong bi-partisan support for H.R. 1424, led by Representatives Patrick Kennedy (D-MA) and Jim Ramstad (R-MN) and 268 co-sponsors**

For further information, contact Faces & Voices of Recovery
www.facesandvoicesofrecovery.org or 202.737.0690