

## Michaud Praises House Consideration of National Mental Health Parity Legislation

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WASHINGTON, DC - Later today, the House of Representatives is expected to pass H.R. 1424, the Paul Wellstone Mental Health and Addiction Equity Act. Under the bill, an insurer or group health plan must ensure that any financial requirements - such as deductibles, copayments, coinsurance, and out-of-pocket expenses - applied to mental health and addiction benefits are no more restrictive or costly than the financial requirements applied to comparable medical and surgical benefits that the plan covers.

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"Each week I am working with my colleagues on the Veterans Affairs' Committee to improve access to mental health care for our nation's veterans. The passage of this bill today is a huge step in the right direction for all Americans, especially those who have faced hurdles in receiving the mental health care that they need," said Michaud. "Members of Congress and all federal employees currently enjoy 'parity' coverage for mental health care. It is long past time that all Americans enjoy similar coverage."

H.R. 1424 applies only to insurers and group health plans that provide mental health benefits. It also exempts businesses of 50 or fewer employees; and businesses that experience an overall premium increase of 2 percent or more in the first year and 1 percent in subsequent years. Maine already requires full mental health parity.