

## PARITY IMPLEMENTATION COALITION

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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### COALITION APPLAUDS NEW URAC PARITY STANDARDS

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** — Members of the Parity Implementation Coalition applaud URAC's new accreditation standards that require health plans to establish a compliance program with respect to the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008 (MHPAEA). URAC, the accrediting body for many of the nation's health plans, is the first accreditation standards organization to add requirements to help plans ensure they are compliant with the parity law.

The new standards will require a parity compliance officer to ensure that the following requirements are met:

- Performance of a thorough review of federal and state laws, and regulations related to "parity of health care services," including MHPAEA;
- Performance of a detailed analysis of documenting compliance with MHPAEA (unless exempt);
- Provision of a detailed analysis demonstrating that their behavioral health utilization management protocols do not have more restrictive treatment limitations than those applied to other medical conditions;
- Coordination with any contracted behavioral health carve-outs to ensure that there are not more stringent quantitative and nonquantitative treatment limitations, including pharmacy services; and
- Inclusion within informational documents for consumers and employer purchasers, of descriptions of the processes used to ensure parity act compliance, if applicable.

Additionally, URAC announced that consumers and providers can file complaints at:  
<https://www.urac.org/consumers/>

"We applaud URAC for releasing these standards, which will help ensure individuals can access the benefits promised to them under the law," said Coalition Co-Chair Sam Muszynski. "In particular, requiring plans to establish a parity compliance program is very important for ensuring plan awareness and compliance with the law."

"On behalf of consumers and families in and seeking recovery from mental and addictive disorders, we thank URAC for releasing these standards that will ensure transparent access to

life-saving treatment and making a portal publicly available for MHPAEA non-compliance complaints,” said Andrew Sperling, Director for Federal Legislative Advocacy at the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI).

“Because we have seen confusion in the states over the intersection of federal law and state responsibilities for implementing and enforcing MHPAEA, we are particularly pleased URAC is requiring a thorough review of federal and state laws,” said Patrick Kirse, CFO/COO of The Watershed Treatment Programs. “Additionally, we thank URAC for establishing guidelines for setting up a MHPAEA compliance program and we look forward to working with payers, patients and state and federal officials on implementation and enforcement of the law.”

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The Parity Implementation Coalition includes the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, American Psychiatric Association, American Society of Addiction Medicine, Betty Ford Center, Cumberland Heights, Faces and Voices of Recovery, Hazelden, MedPro Billing, Mental Health America, National Alliance on Mental Illness, National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems, National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare, TeenScreen, and The Watershed Addiction Treatment Programs. The organizations advanced parity legislation for over twelve years in an effort to end discrimination against individuals and families who seek services for mental health and substance use disorders and remain committed to its effective implementation.