The Nation's Voice on Mental Illness

February 6, 2008

The Honorable Norm Coleman
United States Senate
320 Hart Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Coleman:

On behalf of the 210,000 members and 1,200 affiliates of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), I am writing to express strong support for your legislation to delay and impose a moratorium on regulations issued by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) on case management services under Medicaid (S 2578). NAMI strongly supports this important effort to prevent reductions in critical community-based services for Medicaid beneficiaries living with mental illness. As the nation's largest organization representing individuals with severe mental illness and their families, NAMI is pleased to support this important measure.

In NAMI's view, these regulations exceed congressional intent and have enormous potential to threaten vital services for both children and adults living with mental illness. Research confirms that individuals with serious mental illnesses who receive case management services achieve better outcomes, such as stable housing and improved functioning. Through Section 6052 of the Deficit Reduction Act (P.L. 109-171), Congress clarified the scope of the case management services, excluding from the definition the direct delivery of certain underlying medical, educational, or social services, while making clear that case management services remain an allowable, legitimate Medicaid expenses. However, these interim final rules go far beyond the DRA's statutory provisions on numerous fronts.

As you know, these regulations are expected to go into effect on March 3, 2008. This restrictive and overreaching rule must be slowed down to permit adequate time for Congress to further clarify the provisions in the DRA and allow for more adequate state planning. S 2578, by delaying implementation of this overreaching and restrictive regulation until April 1, 2009, will also ensure that congressional intent and the statutory provisions of the DRA are upheld.

NAMI looks forward to working with you and your Senate colleagues to ensure passage of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Fitzpatrick, M.S.W.
Executive Director

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