

I Thank you - pleasure / gratitude

II Wish You Well - efforts to improve public's awareness and understanding of the mental health issues

III And I believe your efforts not in vain
A. because I think there is general increase in the awareness that mental illness is the same as physical illness - with proper treatment and medication - individual recover -
B. I think the old stereotypes are being challenged and effectively.

IV Political concerns as well -

A. 14B 2337 - Mental Health Parity Act

1. provides equal and comprehensive insurance coverage and accessibility to treatment for m. ill as with p. ill.
2. prohibits insurance companies from discriminating must have same terms and conditions as w. ill.
3. ~~visit to July 1~~
3. inpatient day - ~~at least 60 days~~ prior to July 1 1997 same terms and conditions after July 1 1997 - total number of days equal to physical benefits
4. ~~outpatient day~~

4. out patient drugs - after deductible -
80% for first 5 visits in any one calendar year
65% sixth through 30th visit
50% 31st and beyond

5. prohibit life time maximums - separate from physical

6. Insurance Com. held hearings - Health & Human Services
Comm. holding hearings - this summer

B. HB 1036 - Loan Forgiveness for Mental Health / 1 yr

Staff Workers -

1. Full time - dir., Caseworker, direct caregiver,
therapist or program coordinator

2. Can't earn more than \$35000/yr.

3. And must have PHEAH loan

4. Obviously same should be -

5. Passed House Feb 6 -

in Senate Ed Comm.

Not all positives

1. 260,000 - MNO - MA - 29,000 - 32,000 disabled

many on life sustaining drugs - to be reevaluated -

C. Behavioral
Health "Coverage"
Managed Care

10. Part H
direct Ed. Per
Gov agreed
to stay in -
\$11 mil. + 6.5
early out. in

Rep. Tangretti Remarks

Mental Health Association

May 30, 1996

(Usual Greetings and Acknowledgments)

I want to express my gratitude for the honor and pleasure of joining you this afternoon.

And I want to wish you well in your efforts to improve the public's awareness of mental health issues and your admirable efforts to assist those who fall victim to mental illness.

From the perspective of a layman such as myself, we look upon developments affecting mental health and we see prospects that are

highly encouraging within the profession, itself.

At the same time, developments appear to be less encouraging in the political environment within which the mental health profession must function.

With startling regularity, we read of new findings and new medications that are revolutionizing the treatment of mental illness making it possible for more people to recover more fully...and in shorter periods of time...from encounters with mental illness.

To the layman, it all adds up to an impression of near-miraculous progress in the

treatment of psychological ailments and disorders.

At the same time, I believe a great deal of progress is being made in the public's perception of mental illness and the vulnerabilities that we are all increasingly exposed to by the stresses of modern life.

The concerns... the political concerns I referred to earlier...have to do with what appears to be a retreat from our past commitment of expanding government's assistance to the needy...whether they are economically needy or needy in body or mind.

Budget related -

The recent bill to cut off medical coverage for 260,000 economically disadvantaged Pennsylvanians is one example of that concern, as are other developments in that direction that are occurring in state houses and in the Congress where a kind of reactionary extremism seems to have taken hold.

76,000
 - Particulars
 24,000 to 32,000
 individuals previously
 considered disabled
 unable to work -
 re-evaluated -
 many of mental
 illness - life -
 sustaining drugs.

Behavioral "care
 out" - separate
 contract under
 State's managed
 care agreement.

It remains to be seen how far these developments will go toward shredding the social safety net we've built up in this country over the past 50 or 60 years, and it would be a tragedy if that were the outcome.

Now agreed
 not to withdraw
 from Part. H of
 Health Care
 Act - Only
 intervention program
 through SEPW -
 saves \$11.3 bil
 money
 0-3 yrs.
 agrees to keep
 \$6.5 m increase.

But it would not be farfetched to say that

your profession, as so many other professions
that help to form that safety net, will be affected.

Not all of the developments in government
are quite so ominous, however. And some are
particularly helpful and encouraging.

WHILE NUMEROUS PIECES OF
LEGISLATION DEALING WITH MENTAL
HEALTH HAVE BEEN INTRODUCED IN THE
PENNSYLVANIA HOUSE AND SENATE
DURING THE 1995-96 LEGISLATIVE
SESSION, I WOULD LIKE TO ADDRESS TWO
OF THEM TODAY.

HOUSE BILL 2237, (INTRODUCED BY
REP. THOMAS GANNON, A REPUBLICAN
FROM MONTGOMERY COUNTY) WOULD
CREATE THE MENTAL HEALTH PARITY ACT.

THIS ACT WOULD SERVE TO PROVIDE
EQUAL AND COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH
INSURANCE COVERAGE AND
ACCESSIBILITY TO TREATMENT FOR
THOSE WHO SUFFER FROM A MENTAL
ILLNESS JUST AS IS NOW PROVIDED FOR
PHYSICAL ILLNESS.

SPECIFICALLY, THE BILL WOULD
PROHIBIT ANY INSURANCE PROVIDER
FROM DISCRIMINATING AGAINST ANY
PERSON WITH A MENTAL ILLNESS BY
FAILING TO PROVIDE BENEFITS FOR THE
TREATMENT AND DIAGNOSIS OF THESE
ILLNESSES UNDER THE SAME TERMS AND
CONDITIONS AS THAT WHICH IS PROVIDED
FOR PHYSICAL ILLNESS.

PRIOR TO JULY 1, 1997, WITH
RESPECT TO INPATIENT BENEFITS
PROVIDED IN A LICENSED OR CERTIFIED
FACILITY, AT LEAST 60 DAYS IN ANY

CALENDAR YEAR WOULD HAVE TO BE
PROVIDED UNDER THE SAME TERMS AND
CONDITIONS AS A PHYSICAL ILLNESS.

AFTER JULY 1, 1997, THE TOTAL
NUMBER OF DAYS FOR WHICH BENEFITS
ARE PAYABLE WOULD HAVE TO BE AT
LEAST EQUAL TO THE SAME TERMS THAT
APPLY TO BENEFITS FOR A PHYSICAL
ILLNESS.

WITH RESPECT TO BENEFITS FOR
INPATIENT DIVERSION SERVICES, AT
LEAST 60 DAYS OF SERVICES WOULD
HAVE TO BE COVERED UNDER THE SAME

TERMS THAT APPLY TO INPATIENT
BENEFITS FOR PHYSICAL ILLNESS.

WITH RESPECT TO OUTPATIENT
COVERAGE, BENEFITS WHICH ARE
RENDERED TO TREAT MENTAL ILLNESS
WOULD HAVE TO BE PAID IN THE
FOLLOWING MANNER, AFTER THE
APPLICABLE DEDUCTIBLE:

-- 80 PERCENT FOR THE FIRST FIVE

VISITS IN ANY CALENDAR YEAR;

-- 65 PERCENT FOR THE SIXTH

THROUGH 30TH VISIT IN A CALENDAR

YEAR;

-- 50 PERCENT FOR THE 31ST VISIT

AND BEYOND IN A CALENDAR YEAR.

AN OFFICE VISIT TO A PHYSICIAN OR
OTHER HEALTH CARE PROVIDER FOR
MEDICATION MANAGEMENT MAY NOT BE
COUNTED AGAINST THE NUMBER OF
VISITS REQUIRED TO BE COVERED UNDER
THE OUTPATIENT BENEFITS SECTION, AND
WOULD HAVE TO BE REIMBURSED THE
SAME AS AN OFFICE VISIT FOR PHYSICAL
ILLNESSES.

IN ADDITION, HOUSE BILL 2237
WOULD PROHIBIT AN INSURANCE
PROVIDER FROM CREATING SEPARATE
LIFETIME MAXIMUMS FOR PHYSICAL AND
MENTAL ILLNESSES; SEPARATE
DEDUCTIBLES AND COINSURANCE
AMOUNTS FOR PHYSICAL AND MENTAL
ILLNESSES; AND SEPARATE OUT-OF-
POCKET LIMITS IN A 12-MONTH PERIOD
FOR PHYSICAL AND MENTAL ILLNESSES.

HOUSE BILL 2237 HAS BEEN
REFERRED TO THE HOUSE HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE, AND THE
COMMITTEE IS PREPARING TO HOLD A
SERIES OF HEARINGS ON THE
LEGISLATION IN THE NEXT SEVERAL
MONTHS.

ANOTHER IMPORTANT PIECE OF
LEGISLATION FOR THE MENTAL HEALTH
PROFESSION, IS HOUSE BILL 1036.
(INTRODUCED BY REP. TOM PETRONE, A
DEMOCRAT FROM ALLEGHENY COUNTY.)

THIS LEGISLATION WOULD CREATE A
LOAN FORGIVENESS PROGRAM FOR
MENTAL HEALTH AND MENTAL
RETARDATION STAFF WORKERS WHO ARE
EMPLOYED FULL-TIME AS A DIRECTOR,
CASEWORKER, DIRECT CAREGIVER,
THERAPIST OR PROGRAM COORDINATOR
BY A COUNTY-APPROVED MENTAL HEALTH
OR MENTAL RETARDATION DEPARTMENT
OR BY A PRIVATE PROVIDER UNDER
CONTRACT TO THE COUNTY.

UNDER THIS BILL, QUALIFIED



APPLICANTS COULD MAKE NO MORE THAN

\$35,000 A YEAR AND MUST HAVE RECEIVED

A LOAN THROUGH PHEAA.

THERE IS AN URGENT NEED FOR

MENTAL HEALTH AND MENTAL

RETARDATION STAFF PROFESSIONALS IN

PENNSYLVANIA. COLLEGE STUDENTS ARE

CHOOSING OTHER SPECIALTIES AND THE

POOL OF QUALIFIED STAFF MEMBERS IS

DWINDLING.

THIS BILL WILL ENCOURAGE BOTH
COLLEGE STUDENTS TO ENTER THIS FIELD
AND STAFF MEMBERS TO CONTINUE
WORKING IN THE COMMONWEALTH.

X

THE WORK THAT MENTAL HEALTH
AND MENTAL RETARDATION STAFF
WORKERS DO IS TOUGH, BUT IT'S ALSO
VITAL, AS A SERVICE TO THOSE WHO
SUFFER FROM MENTAL HEALTH
PROBLEMS.

HOUSE BILL 1036 WOULD HELP

PROVIDE FOR THOSE SUFFERING FROM
MENTAL DISABILITIES BY MAKING SURE
THAT THOSE WHO ARE ENTRUSTED WITH
THEIR CARE ARE WELL-TRAINED AND
DEDICATED TO THEIR PROFESSION.

X

I JOINED A MAJORITY OF MY
COLLEAGUES IN VOTING FOR THIS BILL ON
FEB. 6 OF THIS YEAR, AND THE BILL NOW
AWAITS ACTION BY THE STATE SENATE
EDUCATION COMMITTEE.

AS ALWAYS, IF I OR MY STAFF CAN BE
OF ASSISTANCE TO YOU ON ANY STATE-
RELATED MATTER, SUCH AS KEEPING
TRACK OF THESE OR OTHER BILLS,
PLEASE CONTACT ME AT MY DISTRICT
OFFICE IN GREENSBURG OR AT MY OFFICE
IN HARRISBURG.

I LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING FROM
YOU AND AGAIN COMMEND YOU FOR YOUR
EFFORTS ON BEHALF OF A MOST WORTHY
CAUSE.

THANK YOU.