

ADVOCACY ALERT



Dr. Maria Fletcher, Vice President

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Advocacy  **Action**

Timothy's Law Signed

The new law took effect January 1, 2007 and requires health insurance providers to provide comparable insurance coverage for mental illnesses ("parity") as the policies provide for other medical care. This will allow adults and children with biologically-based mental illnesses to receive the same health care coverage benefits as those provided for other physical ailments.

In a calendar year, the coverage must include at least 30 days of active inpatient (hospital) care, and at least 20 days of active treatment in a facility operated by the State Office of Mental Health (OMH), a psychiatrist or psychologist licensed to practice in New York, or a university faculty practice corporation. The cost of any premiums and deductibles must be consistent with those imposed for other benefits available under the insurance policy.

The coverage needs to include treatment for schizophrenia/psychotic disorders, major depression, obsessive compulsive disorders, bulimia, anorexia, serious cases of attention deficit disorders in children, disruptive disorders, or pervasive development disorders.

In addition, children under 18 years of age are eligible for coverage if they have serious suicidal symptoms or other life-threatening self-destructive behaviors, significant psychotic symptoms, behavior caused by emotional disturbances that places the child at risk of personal injury or significant property damage, or behavior caused by emotional disturbances that places the child at substantial risk of removal from the household.

Timothy's law will sunset on January 31, 2009.