RICHARD BLUMENTHAL
CONNECTICUT

UNITED STATES SENATE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

October 17, 2012

The Honorable Hilda Solis
The Secretary of Labor
Washington, D.C. 20210

Dear Madam Secretary,

I am writing to urge you to issue final regulations or sub-regulatory guidance on the Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008 (MHPAEA).

Because the law has been implemented without guidance on scope of services, health plans continue to provide disparate benefits to individuals with mental health and substance use disorders than those patients with other medical conditions. As a result, plan participants in Connecticut are being denied essential services, treatments, and benefits.

The Congressional intent of this law was to ensure patients' access to the full scope of mental health and substance use disorder benefits that are medically appropriate for their condition. The basic framework of the law is to equalize mental health and substance use disorder benefits and medical benefits, and end the discrimination that has for so long limited access to mental health and substance use disorder benefits as compared to medical benefits covered by plans.

Unfortunately, patients in Connecticut today continue to have limited access to intermediate levels of care – partial hospitalization and intensive outpatient and residential treatment services – even though a full continuum of care is provided under their plan for medical benefits. In the absence of regulations that make Congressional intent clear, plans have increasingly excluded coverage for residential life-saving eating disorder and addiction treatment.

I look forward to continuing to work with you on the implementation and enforcement of these important protections for the tens of millions of Americans affected by mental health and substance use disorders. Please contact Rachel Pryor with my staff at (202) 224-2823 with any questions.

Sincerely,

Richard Blumenthal
United States Senate