

Parity Legislation Passes First Hurdle

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Advocates of addiction parity were pleased as lawmakers passed legislation that would end the imposition of limits on funding for addiction and mental health treatment. The legislation, called the [Paul Wellstone Mental Health and Addiction Equity Act](#), was passed by the House of Representatives by a margin of 268 to 148.

"We've waited 12 long years for this historic day," said Rep. Jim Ramstad (R-Minn.), co-chair of the Congressional Addiction, Treatment and Recovery Caucus with Rep. Patrick Kennedy (D-R.I.). "I am grateful that the House has taken this important step to end the discrimination against people who need treatment for mental illness and chemical addiction."

"It's about opening up the doors and ending the shadow of discrimination against the mentally ill," said Rep. Kennedy.

The next step in the legislative process is for the legislation to go to the Senate for a vote. Senators may pass legislation that differs from the House Bill.

"This is an important step forward," said Cynthia Moreno Tuohy, NCAC II, CCDC III, SAP, Executive Director of NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals. "This issue has been an important health issue for over a decade. The fact that we have come so far is a tribute to Representatives Ramstad and Kennedy, as well as the activists who have worked on behalf of this issue and the millions who have had their lives touched by addiction."