

Senator Kennedy's proposal is first step toward access to health care for all Americans

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NAADAC, The Association for Addiction Professionals, has endorsed the "Health Care for Working Families Act." Sponsored by Senator Edward M. Kennedy, D-Mass., and unveiled today at a National Press Club luncheon, the bill extends health care coverage to one-third of the nation's uninsured workers and their families.

"Millions of Americans with alcohol and drug disorders do not have access to treatment, and many who receive treatment are underserved," said Bill B. Burnett, president of NAADAC. "This bill is an important first step toward providing quality, affordable health care coverage for all citizens.

Senator Kennedy's proposal requires firms with 100 or more employees to provide health insurance coverage that is equivalent to the coverage now provided for federal employees.

"Health care coverage that allows prevention and early intervention will save lives and reduce the societal damage caused by substance abuse and other chronic medical problems," said Burnett.

Alcohol and drug disorders indirectly cost American society more than \$294 billion annually, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Center for Substance Abuse Treatment.