

January 5, 2010

The Honorable Christopher Dodd  
United States Senate  
SR-448 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510-0702

Dear Senator Dodd:

I am writing on behalf of the Connecticut Community Providers Association (CCPA) to express our sincere thanks and appreciation for your leadership in passing historic and significant healthcare reform legislation. All of us in Connecticut know of your passion and commitment to this issue and are grateful for your dedication to helping all Americans have access to dependable and affordable healthcare insurance.

The Connecticut Community Providers Association represents organizations that provide services and supports for children and adults with disabilities and significant challenges including people with substance use disorders, mental illness, developmental and physical disabilities. Community providers serve 500,000 of the state's most vulnerable residents.

**Now that the House and Senate are about to enter a historic health care reform conference committee, we ask your assistance on a critical matter: seeking the authorization of Federally Qualified Behavioral Health Centers (FQBHCs). This new definition is included in the legislation passed by the House (H.R. 3200, Sec. 2513),**

People with mental health and addiction disorders are more likely than other Americans to be uninsured. Based upon a recent analysis completed by the National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare, 2.8 million individuals with serious mental illness will be obtaining coverage as a result of these Medicaid expansions, in effect making the federal government the largest funder of community mental health services.

The FQBHC definition is critical to helping us prepare for this massive influx of persons in need of mental health and addiction services. The definition establishes federal service standards for the provision of mental health services that more accurately reflects the community-based services now provided by community mental health organizations. The FQBHC definition will also require new accountability standards that should improve implementation of evidenced-based practices and better clinical outcomes.

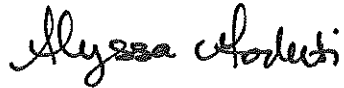
**CCPA**

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Authorization of Federally Qualified Behavioral Health Centers (FQBHC)

In closing, it is our understanding that the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) has assigned a zero score to the FQBHC definition. Again, Senator Dodd, thank you for your outstanding leadership health issues and we appreciate your willingness to listen to us on this remaining critical issue for the community mental health providers in Connecticut.

Sincerely,



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