

Health Subcommittee Completes Markup Approved Legislation Promotes Mental Health Parity, Helps Raise Funds for Breast Cancer Research

The Subcommittee on Health today completed a markup on two important health care bills.

NEWS RELEASE
Committee on Energy and Commerce

Rep. John D. Dingell, Chairman

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Health Subcommittee Completes Markup Approved Legislation Promotes Mental Health Parity, Helps Raise Funds for Breast Cancer Research

Washington, D.C. — The Subcommittee on Health today completed a markup on two important health care bills. The first, H.R. 1236, would extend the authority of the United States Postal Service to issue a special postage stamp to support breast cancer research. Money raised through sales of the stamp would go to help fund research, in part, at the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The second, H.R. 1424, “The Paul Wellstone Mental Health and Addiction Equity Act of 2007,” aims to improve mental health coverage by prohibiting discrimination and treatment limits by health insurance companies to those affected with mental health and substance related disorders. The bill would amend the Public Health Service Act, the Internal Revenue Code and the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974.

“I applaud my colleagues for moving these critical bills forward,” said Rep. John D. Dingell (D-MI), Chairman of the Committee on Energy and Commerce. “One will help raise awareness about breast cancer and fund life-saving research. The other honors the legacy of my good friend Senator Paul Wellstone, who was deeply committed to ending the discrimination that people with mental health and substance abuse issues often face. I look forward to supporting these bills in the full Committee markup and on the House floor.”

"In spite of widespread recognition that mental illness and substance abuse are treatable illnesses, glaring inequities exist between health insurance coverage for mental health and that for other medical conditions," Rep. Frank Pallone (D-NJ), Chairman of the Subcommittee on Health. "By approving this legislation and putting mental health on par with medical and surgical benefits, we will be improving the availability and affordability of healthcare for those with mental health and substance abuse conditions."

Subcommittee Chairman Pallone offered a manager's amendment for each bill, which were approved by voice vote. An amendment to H.R. 1424 offered by Rep. Heather Wilson (R-NM) and two amendments to H.R. 1424 offered by Rep. Nathan Deal (R-GA) were not approved.

The approved bills will now be referred to the full Committee on Energy and Commerce.

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Prepared by the Committee on Energy and Commerce

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