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APA Practice Organization Applauds Rep. Dingell for Reintroducing Patients' Bill of Rights

Washington, D.C. June 22, 2004 -- The American Psychological Association Practice Organization (APAPO) applauds Representative John D. Dingell (D-MI) for introducing H.R. 4628, a patients' bill of rights that recognizes the need to close the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA) loophole that continues to leave patients vulnerable and managed care companies without necessary accountability.

Yesterday's Supreme Court decision in *Aetna Health v. Davila* shines a bright spotlight on the "loophole" in ERISA that, unfortunately, allows managed care companies to escape liability for denial of care decisions that injure or kill patients. This loophole leaves approximately 131 million people who are in ERISA health plans with no fair recourse to receive damages for the harm caused by denial of treatment. Further, it leaves no real way to hold managed care companies accountable when these companies put profits ahead of patients.

The APA Practice Organization is in full agreement with Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg who, in her concurring opinion, urges Congress to attend to "an unjust and increasingly tangled ERISA regime."

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The American Psychological Association Practice Organization is an affiliate of the American Psychological Association, the largest scientific and professional organization representing psychology in the United States and the world's largest association of psychologists. APA's membership includes more than 155,000 researchers, educators, clinicians, consultants and students.