



AMERICAN
PSYCHOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

November 19, 2009

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader Reid:

I am writing on behalf of the American Psychological Association (APA) in support of the *Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act* and the motion to proceed to Senate floor debate. You have skillfully merged the bills passed by the Finance Committee and Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, both of which have received APA's overall support. This comprehensive health reform legislation will improve access to affordable, quality health care for individuals across the lifespan.

Among its many laudable provisions, the *Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act* promotes: integrated, interdisciplinary health care in primary care and other health settings; mental and behavioral health education and training, as well as pediatric and geriatric health professions education and training; mental health and substance use services, including behavioral health treatment, among essential health care benefits at parity with those for physical health; Medicaid expansion; screening, prevention, and early intervention; comparative effectiveness research; efforts to reduce health disparities and promote cultural and linguistic competence; and expansion of home- and community-based options for long term care. In a key priority for psychologists who practice in Medicare, the bill extends the 5 percent increase in reimbursement for psychotherapy, thereby enhancing access to needed services.

The bill also comprises critical private insurance market reforms, such as a prohibition on pre-existing condition exclusions, guaranteed issue and renewal requirements, and the elimination of discrimination based on health status, disability, and conditions arising from domestic violence. These will foster access to needed physical, mental, and behavioral health care for millions of Americans.

We appreciate your many years of leadership in working toward the enactment of legislation that will both responsibly reform our health care system and provide vital coverage for those most in need – including working families, children and youth, older adults, individuals with disabilities, and those with mental and substance use disorders. APA welcomes the opportunity to work with you to gain Senate passage of the *Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act* and further improve it in conference to secure the enactment of the strongest possible health care reform bill. Please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Ellen Garrison, APA's Senior Policy Advisor, at (202) 336-6066 or egarrison@apa.org, if APA might be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "N. Anderson".

Norman B. Anderson, Ph.D.
Chief Executive Officer

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