



We're here for You!

April 4, 2007

*CAMFT is
dedicated to the
advancement and
understanding of
the profession of
marriage and
family therapy as
both an art
and a science, to
maintaining high
standards of
professional
ethics and
qualifications,
and to expanding
the recognition
and utilization of
the profession.*

The Honorable Pete Stark
Member, Committee on Ways and Means
Chair, Subcommittee on Health
U. S. House of Representatives
239 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

RE: HR 1663 (Stark) Mental Health Parity Under Medicare
Inclusion of Marriage and Family Therapists in Medicare Part B

Dear Congressman Stark:

On behalf of the 29,000 members of the California Association of Marriage and Family Therapists, we would like to express our support and our appreciation for your sponsorship of HR 1663 and for the inclusion of licensed marriage and family therapists as reimbursable under Medicare Part B.

We believe parity for mental health services is essential both within Medicare and apart from Medicare, and believe this bill is a step in the right direction. Untreated or delayed treatment of mental health issues result in increased physical health conditions, which places greater demands on emergency rooms and increases the need for other physical health care. Providing parity for mental health care is critical in reducing stigma against those who suffer from mental illness. It is especially important for those who are living with the effects of aging or a disability to be able seek mental health care without experiencing mental health discrimination. We applaud your very worthwhile effort.

We also thank you for recognizing that licensed marriage and family therapists are a core mental health discipline, that due to legislative fiat are not reimbursed by Medicare as are the other mental health disciplines. The inclusion of marriage and family therapists in Medicare Part B will assure the elderly and disabled greater access to mental health care at a time when it is most needed.

We thank you for meeting with our Board Members on March 29th, 2007, and thank you for sharing the good news about our inclusion in HR 1663. If you have any questions or concerns about marriage and family therapists, or any of the

California Association
of Marriage and
Family Therapists

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issues we discussed, please do not hesitate to contact me. Let us know what we can do to help move HR 1663 forward. We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Riemersma".

Mary Riemersma
Executive Director

Cc: Deborah Swacker, Downey McGrath Group