

SPECIAL SECTION

Implementation of the Federal Parity Law

This special section of *Good Practice* focuses on implementation of the federal mental health parity law, the Wellstone-Domenici Mental Health Parity & Addiction Equity Act (MHPAEA) of 2008. The federal rule pertaining to implementation of this federal parity law takes effect on January 1, 2011, for most health plans to which MHPAEA applies.

The APA Practice Organization (APAO) and the American Psychological Association offer an array of informational resources for members and the public about the parity law.

PARITY RESOURCES

FOR MEMBERS

See pages 17-18 of this magazine for answers to common questions from members about the federal parity law and its implementation. Our Practice Central website at apapracticecentral.org (see box on this page) contains considerably more information tailored for psychologists, including a detailed summary of the federal rule available to members of the APA Practice Organization (APAO). In addition, the *PracticeUpdate* e-newsletter from APAPO periodically includes information and updates about MHPAEA.

FOR CLIENTS AND CONSUMERS

The FYI fact sheet found at the end of this special section is designed to help your clients and other consumers of psychological services understand how mental health insurance coverage is affected by MHPAEA. The page is perforated for easy removal. Members are encouraged to photocopy and distribute this fact sheet to their clients as well as disseminate it as appropriate during public education events and other community outreach activities.

The APA Help Center at apa.org/helpcenter has additional information for the public about the mental health parity law and mental health insurance. The mirror site, Centro de Apoyo de APA en Español at apa.org/centrodeapoyo, contains Spanish-language versions of Help Center material.

The screenshot shows the Practice Central website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with tabs for 'CE & Professional Development', 'Legislative & Legal Advocacy', 'Reimbursement', 'Business of Practice', and 'Public Education & Outreach'. Below this is a search bar and a breadcrumb trail: 'Home > Legislative & Legal Advocacy > Mental Health Parity'. The main content area is titled 'Mental Health Parity' and contains several sections: 'The Law and Its Implementation' with bullet points about implementation dates and regulatory updates; 'For Consumers' with a link to a PDF about insurance coverage; 'For Employers' with a link to a PDF about the employer's guide; and 'Additional Resources' with links to word counts, local media stories, and a conference. A right-hand sidebar features a 'Legislative Action Center' with a link to the legislative action center, 'Federal CE Credits' with a link to evidence-based practice in psychology, and 'Parity Resources' with links to a new parity monitor, an APA statement on reform, and a health insurance program expansion memo.

The Mental Health Parity section of apapracticecentral.org contains extensive information about MHPAEA.

FOR EMPLOYERS

The Psychologically Healthy Workplace Program (PHWP) website—phwa.org—contains information and resources for employers and the psychologists who work with them. The site prominently features “An Employer’s Guide to the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act.” In addition, the PHWP’s Good Company Podcast from October 2009 focuses on MHPAEA while a posting from the same month to the Good Company Blog contains a presentation on understanding the federal parity law.

PRACTICE  CENTRAL

FIND MORE AT PRACTICE CENTRAL

The Mental Health Parity section of the Practice Central website at apapracticecentral.org contains numerous resources related to the Wellstone-Domenici Mental Health Parity & Addiction Equity Act. Visit apapracticecentral.org/advocacy/parity for detailed information about implementation of the law, the history of organized psychology’s quest to achieve parity legislation and additional resources.