



Media Contact:
Cindy Kazan
Communi-K, Inc.
414.352.3535; ckazan@communik-pr.com

Webinar to Discuss Clinical, Legal and Financial Implications of Mental Health Parity Legislation

August 18, 2009 (CHICAGO, IL) The Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008, which goes into effect on October 3, 2009, prohibits group health or self-insured plans covering more than 50 employees from imposing caps or limitations on mental health treatment or substance use benefits that are not also applied to medical and surgical benefits. On August 27, 2009, at 1:00 p.m. CST, CuraLinc Healthcare and American Health Holding will present a free webinar that will provide an overview of the Act, from both a legal and a clinical perspective, along with recommendations for plan design options that will effectively manage mental health and substance abuse costs.

“The current economic climate is forcing many companies to reduce expenses and increase employee productivity. Any cost increase or reduction in employee efficiency can be detrimental to the company’s short- and long-term financial viability,” says John Kamilis, MA, LCPC, Director of Clinical Services with CuraLinc Healthcare. “Understanding both the direct and indirect impact of the Act is the first step in managing Parity-related expectations.”

Most medical plans started offering mental health and substance abuse (MH/SA) services in the 1970s. While, today, MH/SA expenses only account for about 5% of total health costs, the impact of members with mental health or substance abuse conditions is felt throughout every organization. With that in mind, consider the following:

- About 1 in 4 Americans have a diagnosable mental health condition, and about half of Americans will have a diagnosable mental health condition in their lifetime.
- 75% of illicit drug users (12.9 million) are employed full time or part time.
- 70% of people diagnosed with a mental health condition are employed.
- 42% of highly educated workers reported abusing prescription medications.

According to the Employee Assistance Professionals Association (EAPA), over 90% of employer-sponsored health plans include coverage for mental health and substance abuse services. “Companies that opt to maintain their coverage for these services should lean heavily on their Medical Management vendor to ensure aggressive management of the benefits is occurring. This will ensure the highest level of cost containment and risk avoidance on behalf of the plan,” says Richard Hodsdon Jr. of American Health Holding. “With proper plan design and the right service providers, these programs can actually provide a higher level of service at a lower overall cost to the company.”

To register for the free webinar, “Managing Behavioral Health Costs: A Guide to Mental Health Parity Compliance”, visit <http://www.curalinc.com/mhpawebinar.htm>.

CuraLinc Healthcare (www.curalinc.com) is a national provider of behavioral health and wellness programs. These services include, but are not limited to, Employee Assistance Programs and Managed Behavioral Healthcare services. For more information, email info@curalinc.com or call 800.490.1585.

American Health Holding (www.americanhealthholding.com) is a multi-URAC accredited medical management firm that provides services which span the health care continuum, including Case Management, Utilization Management, Disease Management, Lifestyle/Wellness, Maternity Management, Medical Review, Hospital Bill Auditing, and Pharmacy Benefits Management. For more information, please contact: Joanna Callihan at JCallihan@ahhinc.com or call 866.614.4244 ext 1431