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SEABROOK HOUSE JOINS PATRICK KENNEDY IN FIGHT FOR EQUALITY

Stockton Holds an Addiction & Mental Health Parity Hearing

Seabrook, NJ— Seabrook House is proud to join the Honorable Patrick Kennedy in his fight for mental health and addiction equality at a hearing at Stockton College today.

The Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008 is a federal law that protects a group health plan's mental health and/or substance use coverage benefits. The measure was to ensure that mental health and physical health be treated the same.

“Despite the passage of the law, insurance companies are still denying addiction and mental health treatment to their members,” said Michele Smith, Interim Director of Clinical Services at Seabrook House and an advocate for New Jersey’s National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD NJ).

According to Smith, “This hearing was a way to address the importance of implementing the mental health and addiction parity act. Patrick Kennedy has been holding these important events and collecting the stories of those that have been wrongly fully denied treatment throughout the country.”

Smith added that Seabrook House has seen too many people seeking addiction treatment be turned down by insurance companies. Insurance providers have denied care with claims that someone is not sick enough to get help or is not motivated enough for residential treatment, but trying to get help by calling a rehab is being motivated. I also find it troubling that those same companies do not question the motivation of someone seeking treatment for diabetes, or cancer.

“This hearing was an opportunity for Seabrook House to publically support the cause for equality between physical and mental health,” said Smith. “The hearing included speakers in recovery from mental health and addiction, family members, providers, mental health and addiction parity experts and New Jersey elected officials. The hearing concluded with a question and answer panel.”

Smith noted that, this event was sponsored by NCADD NJ and Stockton College and organized in partnership with Mental Health Association in New Jersey Inc., the New Jersey Association of Mental Health and Addiction Agencies (NJAMHAA), and Parity Implementation Coalition.

“Seabrook House is excited to work so closely with these organizations, in order to help ensure that someday this federal law will be implemented and the stigma surrounding addiction and mental health treatment will no longer exist,” said Smith.

Seabrook House is an internationally recognized, private CARF-accredited addiction treatment center with several locations. The main facility is located in Bridgeton, NJ, convenient to Pennsylvania, New York and surrounding states. Our 90-day transitional living facility for men, Seabrook House West, is located in north central Pennsylvania in the town of Westfield. Our 90-day transitional living facility for women, Changes for Women, is located on our main campus. A regional office is located in New York City, along with outpatient offices in Cherry Hill and Northfield, NJ. Seabrook House has been helping families find the courage to recover from alcoholism, drug addiction and substance abuse since 1974. To contact Seabrook House, please visit the organization’s web site at www.SeabrookHouse.org, or call the 24-hour help line at 1-800-761-7575. ###