

ALERT:

**URGE YOUR U.S. HOUSE MEMBER TO SUPPORT H.R. 5040, LEGISLATION
TO MAKE ADDICTION AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE PROVIDERS
ELIGIBLE FOR HIT FUNDS**

WHAT YOU NEED TO SAY

MESSAGE: “I am a constituent who lives in _____’s District and I would like the Representative to become a co-sponsor of H.R. 5040, the ‘Health Information Technology Extension for Behavioral Health Services Act of 2010.’ Most providers of addiction and mental health services were not eligible for the health information technology funds allocated through last year’s stimulus bill. H.R. 5040 would make providers of lifesaving addiction and mental health treatment services eligible for these funds and strengthen support for cost-effective, quality care.”

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO

ACTION: Please call your U.S. Representative today and ask him/her to cosponsor H.R. 5040, the “Health Information Technology Extension for Behavioral Health Services Act of 2010.” You can find your Members of Congress by visiting <http://www.congress.org/> and entering in your zip code or by calling the U.S. Capitol Switchboard at (202) 224-3121.

If your Representative is on either the House Ways and Means or Energy and Commerce Committees, it is especially important that they hear from you. A list of committee memberships is copied below.

The following Members are current co-sponsors of H.R. 5040: Representatives Patrick Kennedy (D-RI), Tim Murphy (R-PA), Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Marsha Blackburn (R-TN), Joe Courtney (D-CT), Charles A. Gonzalez (D-TX), Gene Green (D-TX), Raúl M. Grijalva (D-AZ), Alcee Hastings (D-FL), Chris Murphy (D-CT), Tim Ryan (D-OH), Ike Skelton (D-MO) and Diane Watson (D-CA).

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- On April 14th, Congressmen Patrick Kennedy (D-RI) and Tim Murphy (R-PA) introduced H.R. 5040, the “HITECH Extension for Behavioral Health Services Act of 2010.” H.R. 5040 would amend current law to make certain providers of addiction and mental health services eligible for HIT funds. These funds would include HIT resources provided through the “American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009” (ARRA) which allocated funds to many health service providers but excluded most providers of addiction and mental health services from eligibility.
- H.R. 5040 is awaiting review in the House Energy and Commerce and Ways and Means Committees. Full text and status of H.R. 5040 can be found at: <http://thomas.loc.gov>.
- To ensure that the legislation quickly moves toward passage, additional bi-partisan co-sponsors of H.R. 5040 are needed today.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call Gabrielle de la Gueronniere or Dan Belnap at Legal Action Center, (202) 544-5478. Thank you for your help!

SUMMARY OF H.R. 5040, THE “HITECH EXTENSION FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES ACT OF 2010.”

On April 14th, Congressmen Patrick Kennedy (D-RI) and Tim Murphy (R-PA) introduced H.R. 5040, the “HITECH Extension for Behavioral Health Services Act of 2010.” H.R. 5040 would amend current law to make certain providers of addiction and mental health services eligible for health information technology funds. These funds would include HIT resources provided through the “American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009” (ARRA) which allocated HIT funds to many health service providers but excluded most providers of addiction and mental health services from eligibility.

Specifically, H.R. 5040 would:

- Amend current law to make certain providers of addiction treatment and mental health services eligible for health information technology (HIT) funds made available through the “American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009” (ARRA); in particular, H.R. 5040 would make the following providers eligible for ARRA incentive funds for the “meaningful use” of electronic health records:
 - Substance abuse professionals and substance abuse treatment facilities
 - Behavioral and mental health professionals and clinics
 - Psychiatric hospitals
- Extend eligibility for Medicaid HIT implementation funds to:
 - Certain mental health and substance abuse treatment facilities (those facilities with at least ten percent of their patient volume receiving Medicaid assistance), and private and public psychiatric hospitals
 - Workforce professionals including certain clinical psychologists and clinical social workers
- Extend eligibility for Medicare HIT payment incentives to certain physicians, clinical psychologists and clinical social workers; certain psychiatric hospitals would also be included as hospitals eligible to receive Medicare HIT funds
- Authorize a \$15 million grant program, through the Department of Health and Human Services’ Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology; entities eligible to receive grant funds would include: mental health and substance abuse treatment facilities and certain psychiatric hospitals; grant funds could be used to:
 - Facilitate the purchase and enhance the use of HIT
 - Train personnel in the use of HIT
 - Improve the secure electronic exchange of health information among mental health and addiction workforce professionals and other health care providers, including primary care providers
 - Improve HIT for adaptation to “community-based behavioral health settings”
 - Assist with the implementation of telemedicine, including facilitation of distance clinical consultations in rural and underserved areas; and
 - Collaborate and integrate with HIT regional extension centers

H.R. 5040 was referred to the House Energy and Commerce and Ways and Means Committees where the legislation awaits review. Full text and status of H.R. 5040 can be found at: <http://thomas.loc.gov>.

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