

NJAMHAA Hails Supreme Court's Healthcare Reform Decision a "Victory for New Jersey"

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“The Supreme Court’s Decision today is a huge victory for New Jersey and the many hundreds of thousands of children and adults who need coverage and improved access to mental health and substance use treatment services” said CEO of the New Jersey Association of Mental Health and Addiction Agencies, Inc. (NJAMHAA) Debra L. Wentz, Ph.D. With the Supreme Court ruling in favor of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA), the major provisions of the law will now go forward as planned.

The ACA will implement several insurance coverage reforms that will expand coverage of uninsured and underinsured people. The Medicaid expansion and federal subsidies will reduce the number of uninsured New Jersey residents by approximately 800,000 from the 1.3 million residents currently uninsured. Strengthening of parity is a major provision of the ACA. The essential health benefits specifically lists mental health and substance use treatment services in addition to extending the provisions of the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act (MHPAEA) into all plans within the health insurance exchanges and the Medicaid expansion, representing a significant step forward in ensuring that these critical services are available to New Jersey residents who need them.

“Access to services has always been a key issue; one in five people have a mental health issue and only 30 percent of them are able to access treatment, in addition nearly 800,000 people in New Jersey have a substance use disorder yet less than seven percent of them are able to access treatment. The expansion of insurance coverage, implementation of health insurance exchanges and the essential health benefits as well as the extension of the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act (MHPAEA) will go a long way in closing the vast access to treatment gap for mental health and substance use disorders” said Wentz.

The ACA will also eliminate pre-existing denials of coverage; eliminate arbitrary lifetime and annual limits; extend coverage for young adults to remain on their parents insurance until the age of 26; close prescription drug coverage gaps for seniors; extend coverage to tens of millions of Americans; moderate to middle income families will receive tax-credit subsidies for health insurance premiums.