



AMERICAN
PSYCHOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

June 16, 2009

The Honorable Edward M. Kennedy
Chairman
Committee on Health, Education,
Labor, and Pensions
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Michael B. Enzi
Ranking Member
Committee on Health, Education,
Labor, and Pensions
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Kennedy and Ranking Member Enzi:

I am writing on behalf of the American Psychological Association (APA) in support of the *Affordable Health Choices Act*. This comprehensive health reform legislation will improve access to affordable, quality health care for our nation, most notably for the 47 million individuals who are currently uninsured. Among its many laudable provisions, the *Affordable Health Choices Act* promotes: integrated, interdisciplinary care in primary care and other health settings; mental and behavioral health workforce training; mental health and substance use benefits among essential health care benefits at parity with those for physical health; screening, prevention, and early intervention; and efforts to reduce health disparities and to promote cultural and linguistic competence.

We look forward to working with the Committee to improve the draft bill as it moves toward passage. As noted in APA's June 12th letter, we recommend inclusion of the *Positive Aging Act* from the last Congress as a means to integrate mental health services into primary care and community settings for older adults, along with other technical amendments, to further enhance this vitally important legislation.

In closing, I would like to thank you both for your many years of leadership and tireless effort in working towards the enactment of legislation that will both responsibly reform our health care system and provide coverage for those most in need—working families, children and youth, older adults, individuals with disabilities, and those with mental and substance use disorders. APA stands with you to ensure that meaningful health care reform, as offered by the *Affordable Health Choices Act*, becomes a reality.

Sincerely,

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Chief Executive Officer

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