



Depression and Bipolar
Support Alliance

Advocacy in DBSA Chapters

Mental health advocacy takes many forms, but it begins with you. One person can make a difference! Furthermore, one DBSA chapter can make a significant difference in their community.

Definition of *advocate*: 1. To speak, plead, or argue in favor of 2. One that argues for a cause; a supporter or defender

If you are someone who lives with a mood disorder, it starts with you believing that your depression or bipolar disorder is not a sign of personal weakness or something that can be whisked away by "pulling yourself out of it." It includes believing that you have the right to access to proper medical care, and the right to employment, housing, access to public services, and all the other benefits and services available to people with physical illnesses.

As a family member or friend of someone with a mood disorder, your advocacy efforts begin with supporting those you know who live with depression or bipolar disorder and acknowledging that their illness does not define who they are.

DBSA Chapter Advocacy

DBSA Chapters and state organizations can play a key role in making a real impact in local, state and national policy-making through advocacy efforts. Margaret Mead suggested that we "Never doubt that a small group of committed citizens can change the world, indeed that is the only thing that ever has."

DBSA Chapters can take that role of serving as a small group of committed citizens. Leaders and participants in chapters can organize, motivate and activate their energy and people-power to be an influential voice behind the cause of mental health equality and respect.

Take the ideas throughout this guide and put them into action in your chapter. Revolutions start with the power of one, and if that one person is not you or a member of your chapter, then who will it be?

Some Basic Ways to Advocate

- Learn all you can. Knowledge is power and being equipped with the most up-to-date information about mood disorders will give you the tools you need to discuss the issues.
- Vote. Know where your candidates stand on issues that are important to you.
- Write to your senators and representatives - Federal and State. (use DBSA's CapWiz Service!)
- Visit your federal and state representatives. Get to know their staff members.

*Adapted from a publication by DBSA's
External Relations Office: Media@DBSAlliance.org*

DBSA CapWiz Legislative Action Center

DBSA provides access to information and tools to help you advocate personally or as a chapter. The CapWiz Legislative Action Center is a web site that individuals can visit to participate in the political process directly.

Visit: http://www.dbsalliance.org/advocacy/Legislative_Action_Center.html or click on the “Advocacy” link from the DBSA web site home page.

DBSA's CapWiz Legislative Action Center lets you:

- Research the issues related to mental health
- Find the legislators for your area
- Research their voting records on specific issues
- View the committees they serve on
- Find their contact info including biographical data
- Examine their PAC donations/contributions
- Directly contact your legislators using a sample letter provided on the site or by composing you own personal message

Talking to Law Makers

Some people find the prospect of meeting with an elected official to be overwhelming and intimidating. There are a few key concepts which will help demystify the process of meeting with elected officials.

Remember, you are the boss. Elected officials work for you, they are public servants. By virtue of your vote, you have the power to keep them in office or put them out of office. They know this, and will be responsive to your needs.

You are an expert. You know more about the issue of concern you are bringing to their attention than they do. Do not be hesitant to speak out; you are an expert and elected officials need the help and guidance of experts. (Federal grant recipients are in no way prohibited from sharing their views on agency funding with their elected officials.)

Build a relationship. It is best to have a relationship with your Member(s) of Congress prior to when you need to request their support. When each new Congress convenes, take 20 minutes and meet with the Member and their staff in the district or state office and help them to understand the work you do.

Preparing for a Meeting with A Member of Congress

If you meet with elected officials in the district office in your area, you are likely to have more time with them and actually meet with them rather than one of their staff.

The advantage of a Washington, DC visit is that you will meet with the specific staff who

will be advising them on your specific issue. Both visits are worth doing regularly. When you are in Washington, DC for business or pleasure, make an appointment to stop in to chat with your Congressional staff to get to know them.

To make an appointment in Washington, DC call the Capitol Switchboard Operator at (202) 224-3121 and ask for your Member of Congress by name.

Prepare: Plan your message in advance and make a clear, well-organized presentation of the issue in 5 minutes or less. Leave a one-page issue brief behind. This can be accompanied by reference materials which support your position.

Simplify: Elected officials are not scientists or doctors and may not understand scientific concepts. Use easy to understand terms and keep your written materials simple. Practice your presentation on a non-scientist friend or family member prior to meeting with elected officials to see if it is easily understood.

Personalize: Health care and medical research are broad issues. Make it human, help elected officials understand how your work will help their constituents-- how it will make a difference for real people suffering from real illnesses.

Listen: Present your case, ask for their support and then let them lead the discussion to clarify their understanding. Do not leave the meeting unless they have clarified what they will do to help or what their next steps will be.

Follow up: Stay in touch with them. Gaining the long term support of elected officials is not achieved through "one-stop shopping." Become a consistent constituent, make frequent personal contacts with your elected official.

GUIDELINES OF EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY

Definition of **advocate**: 1. To speak, plead, or argue in favor of 2. One that argues for a cause; a supporter or defender

You don't need special training to be an advocate. Anyone can do it. All that is needed is a passion for DBSA's mission—to improve the lives of people living with mood disorders.

Most of what a good advocate does is intuitive and grows out of a few basic principles. Below is a list of basic rules most advocates abide by. Remember and refer to these when you become discouraged, confused, or bogged down in detail. These guidelines are meant to streamline your efforts and help you become a more effective advocate.

GUIDELINES FOR EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY

1. Ask for what you want.
2. Be specific.
3. Find a legislative champion.
4. Be ready to work hard.
5. Organize, coordinate and orchestrate.
6. Touch all the bases.
7. Stay flexible.
8. Keep it simple.
9. Assume the perspective of others.
10. Build and preserve your credibility.
11. Anticipate and deal with your opposition.
12. Be prepared to compromise.
13. Never burn your bridges.
14. Target your efforts.
15. Honor the staff.
16. Track your progress.
17. Be persistent.
18. Follow up.

BASIC RULES OF GOOD COMMUNICATION

Whether you are speaking with a legislator, a member of their staff, or an agency who implements policy—there are some general principals for good communication to keep in mind.

- Keep jargon at a minimum.
- Be concise and to the point.
- Reinforce good decision making.
- Communicate before decisions are made.
- Continue communication to meet changing needs.
- Be dependable and honest.
- Use the talents of other good communicators.
- Remember you represent others.
- Remember what you communicate may be shared.

JUST DO IT! A simple postcard with two sentences, a fax with a personal story, or a hand-written letter—these are all good choices. Something is better than nothing. Don't be intimidated or tell yourself that you don't have the time to "do it right." Do what you can.

YOUR AVERAGE, EVERYDAY POLICYMAKER

In general, people who hold public office, or work with public policy, have some common characteristics. Knowing these characteristics, and knowing how to take advantage of them, can improve your chances for success.

Policymakers...

- ...hold public office to help others.
- ...like to be asked.
- ...are good listeners.
- ...do not know everything.
- ...have many demands on their time.
- ...are always running for office.
- ...respond to crises.
- ...act differently when they're being watched.
- ...like to be thanked.
- ...love good press.

RELATIONSHIP BUILDING WITH LEGISLATORS

Getting to know your legislator and establishing a relationship with him or her will help amplify your voice and shed light on your cause. Here are a few ways to help get you noticed.

- Invite your legislator to address a meeting.

- Invite your legislator to visit a program that you administer or participate in.
- Recognize your legislator for his work to improve mental health issues with an award.
- Attend “town meetings” and other forums sponsored by your legislator.
- Volunteer to work on your legislator’s campaign.

WRITING LETTERS AND E-MAIL

Public officials pay careful attention to their mail since it gives them the best perspective on how the public feels about pending legislative activity. Often, form letters and petitions are used, but most legislators place little weight on such an approach. The type of letter that is most appreciated is...

- personal—stress the local/personal impact the bill will have
- brief—no more than a page
- simple—one issue per letter
- specific—refer to the bill by number and name
- clear—asks for action explicitly
- courteous—it’s okay to disagree but be professional

See page 5 for resources that can help identify how and where to send a letter

It is not necessary for you to type your letter, unless your handwriting is impossible to read. Be sure to include a return address, especially if you are sending email. Your legislator will want to know where to send a response and will also want to check and see if you are in his/her constituency. Don’t expect a prompt reply. Legislators receive an extraordinary amount of mail.

PERSONAL VISITS WITH YOUR LEGISLATOR

Personal contact is probably the most effective way to advocate for an issue. You can meet with your legislator either in their capitol office or their local district. Local visits are often easier to schedule and less rushed. Many legislators also have “town hall meetings” where they are open for walk-in visits.

- 1st Call to request a meeting, no more than 30 minutes, and explain your purpose.
- 2nd It is not uncommon to meet with a staff person instead of your legislator, don’t be offended.
- 3rd Plan and practice your presentation, collect supporting materials.
- 4th Learn about the legislator and their position on mental health issues.
- 5th Be on time but plan to wait.
- 6th Announce yourself to the receptionist and present a business card.
- 7th When meeting with the legislator introduce yourself and tell them a little about DBSA.
- 8th State the reason for your visit, limit the number of issues to discuss, and refer to bills by name and number.
- 9th Give the legislator essential information: a review of critical points, the impact of the bill, your recommendation.
- 10th It is a nice idea to offer a personal story, but keep it short.
- 11th Be prepared to answer questions.

- 12th Leave a fact sheet or supporting materials behind.
- 13th Have a picture taken to use in your chapter newsletters or Website. (Be sure to forward a copy to the legislator as a follow-up)
- 14th Thank the legislator for his or her time and leave promptly.
- 15th Immediately after the meeting, record what occurred (who you met with, what was discussed, responses received, and any follow-up needed).
- 16th Write a thank you letter, summarize your point and include any follow-up information.

HOW AND WHERE TO ADDRESS LETTERS

To find out...

- Who are my federal and state legislators?
- Where do I send my letter?
- What should I write in my letter?

Log onto [http://www.dbsalliance.org/advocacy/Legislative Action Center.html](http://www.dbsalliance.org/advocacy/Legislative_Action_Center.html)

Once logged onto the DBSA advocacy page, choose “Visit Capwiz” and you will be able to enter your zip code to find out who represents you in the United States Senate and the House of Representatives, as well as your state legislature. You are also able to immediately pull up summaries and status reports of the pending legislation in the U.S. Congress that pertains to mental health, or to search for relevant activity at your state level. You are also able to write and send (via email) a letter on the spot. Capwiz also gives you access to a list of media outlets in your region, in case you would like to contact them regarding legislation.

To contact your representative, begin your letter like this...

State Senator (ex. Illinois)

The Honorable Jane Doe
 IL State Senate
 State House
 Springfield, Illinois 62706

United States Senator

The Honorable Jane Doe
 United States Senate
 U.S. Senate
 Washington, DC 20510

State Representative (ex. New Hampshire)

The Honorable Jane Doe
 NH House of Representatives
 State House
 Concord, New Hampshire 03301

United States Representative

The Honorable Jane Doe
 Member of Congress
 U.S. House of Representatives
 Washington, DC 20515

GATHERING SUPPORT FOR YOUR CAUSE

There IS strength in numbers. Try to involve as many chapter members as you can in government relations and advocacy. You may also want to join forces with DBSA chapters from across your state. Here are some strategies for working with your chapter and other DBSA groups.

- Circulate flyers to publicize your stance on the issue in question.
- Contact other DBSA chapters in your area directly (they are most likely interested and involved in the same legislative issues as your chapter!)
- Work toward developing an ongoing relationship other community groups to improve your capacity to deal with local and statewide issues. Try contacting:

Community resource centers

Senior centers

Local schools

Service clubs

(Chamber of Commerce, Rotary, Lions, Junior League)

Church service groups

Law enforcement agencies

How a Bill Becomes a Law

Anyone may draft a bill; however, only members of Congress can introduce legislation, and by doing so become the sponsor(s).

There are four basic types of legislation:

- ✓ **Bills**—Legislation introduced either in the House or Senate.
- ✓ **Joint Resolutions**—Legislation similar to a bill that has the force of law if passed by both the House and Senate and the President. (Used for special circumstances.)
- ✓ **Concurrent Resolutions**—Legislative action used to express the position of the House or Senate that does not have the force of law. 4 **Simple Resolutions**—A measure passed in only one house of Congress to express the sentiment of a particular chamber but does not have the force of law.

The official legislative process begins when a bill or resolution is numbered, (**H.R.** signifies a House bill and **S.** a Senate bill), referred to a committee, and printed by the Government Printing Office.

The following are the steps of legislative procedure:

1. **Referral Committee:** With few exceptions, bills are referred to standing committees in the House or Senate according to carefully delineated rules of procedure.
2. **Committee Action:** When a bill reaches a committee it is placed on the committee's calendar. A bill can be referred to a subcommittee or considered by the committee as a whole. It is at this point that a bill is examined carefully and its chances for passage are determined. If the committee does not act on a bill, the bill is effectively dead.
3. **Subcommittee Review:** Often, bills are referred to a subcommittee for study and hearings. Hearings provide the opportunity to put on the record the views of the executive branch, experts, other public officials, supporters, and opponents of the legislation.
4. **Mark Up:** When the hearings are completed, the subcommittee may meet to "mark up" the bill, that is, make changes and amendments prior to recommending the bill to the full committee. If a subcommittee votes not to report legislation to the full committee, the bill dies.
5. **Committee Action to Report a Bill:** After receiving a subcommittee's report on a bill, the full committee can conduct further study and hearings, or it can vote on the subcommittee's recommendations and any proposed amendments. The full committee then votes on its recommendation to the House or Senate. This procedure is called "ordering a bill reported."
6. **Publication of a Written Report:** After a committee votes to have a bill reported, the committee chairman instructs staff to prepare a written report on the bill. This report describes the intent and scope of the legislation, impact on existing laws and programs, position of the executive branch, and views of dissenting members of the committee.

7. **Schedule Floor Action:** After a bill is reported back to the chamber where it originated, it is placed in chronological order on the calendar.
8. **Debate:** When a bill reaches the floor of the House or Senate, there are rules and procedures governing the debate on legislation.
9. **Voting:** After the debate and the approval of any amendments, the bill is passed or defeated by the members voting.
10. **Referral to Other Chamber:** When a bill is passed by the House or Senate it is referred to the other chamber where it usually follows the same route through committee and floor action. This chamber may approve the bill as received, reject it, ignore it, or change it.
11. **Conference Committee Action:** If only minor changes are made to a bill by the other chamber, it is common for the legislation to go directly to the President for signature. However, when the actions of the other chamber significantly alter the bill, a conference committee is formed to reconcile the differences between the House and Senate versions. If the conferees are unable to reach agreement, the legislation dies. If agreement is reached, a conference report is prepared describing the committee members' recommendations for changes. Both the House and Senate must approve the conference report.
12. **Final Action:** After a bill has been approved by both the House and Senate in identical form, it is sent to the President. If the President approves of the legislation, he signs it and it becomes law. Or, the President can take no action for ten days, while congress is in session, and it automatically becomes law. If the President opposes the bill he can veto it; or if he takes no action after the Congress has adjourned its second session, it is a "pocket veto" and the legislation dies.
13. **Overriding a Veto:** If the President vetoes a bill, Congress may attempt to "override the veto." This requires a two-thirds roll call vote of the members who are present in sufficient numbers for a quorum.

Legislative Outreach

Attached are ideas and tips for educating state legislators about mental health issues, such as Mental Health Parity and anti-discrimination. The more your legislator knows, the more likely he/she will be to support mental health legislation.

This is such an important time for people with mental illness. While advancements have been made in many states, many still deny adequate health insurance coverage and fair treatment for people living with a mental illness.

Attached you'll find an array of different activities. Choose the ones that you feel most comfortable with and will meet your goals. You won't accomplish everything at once or everything you want with one tactic, so try implementing a few. If you don't see an immediate change, don't get frustrated! Changes in laws and legislation take a lot of effort and hard work. But you can make a difference!

1. Put on your thinking cap.

It always helps to give your efforts a lot of thought. Before you rush out and contact your legislator, sit down and write a brief plan. Map out the steps and activities you'll need to do to meet your goals.

2. Ask yourself some important questions.

What are your goals? What do you really want to accomplish? Who do you want to reach? They will be your audience. What activities will you have to implement to meet your goals? And how long will it take? Create a timeline. It's always easier to accomplish a goal or objective when you've thought everything out.

3. My legislator isn't involved with the issues I'm interested in.

That's okay. Use this opportunity to develop a relationship and lay a foundation for your outreach efforts. Use DBSA's CapWiz system to pull up your legislator; see what committees he/she is on to find out what issues your legislator is interested in. (<http://capwiz.com/ndmda/home>). Write a letter telling him/her you are a constituent (a voter living in his/her district) and you also support the issue, etc.

4. Form a committee. Find others who have the same passion!

There's always strength in numbers! Find others that have the same interests and views. Think broadly. Identify those with different backgrounds such as family members, friends, acquaintances, co-workers, fellow support group members, neighbors, medical professionals. Ask them to serve on your committee and assist you in outreach activities. If your members are not as knowledgeable as you are on the issues, train them.

5. Arm your committee with the right tools.

Give your members the tools they'll need to implement the plan. Send legislative

updates, detailed information about specific legislation and message points.

6. Identify key legislators.

Instead of trying to reach everyone, identify legislators who have the most influence over important legislation such as Mental Health Parity. And don't forget about legislators who are still "undecided" on how to vote. Include them as a target audience in your plan.

7. Get to know your legislators.

Contact your legislator to request a brief meeting before legislation is introduced. You can familiarize them about the legislation before it is introduced. Be aware of legislator's backgrounds and what constituencies are important to them. DBSA's CapWiz system can be used to pull up all sorts of information on your legislators. (<http://capwiz.com/ndmda/dbq/officials/>)

8. Get to know others who support your cause.

Find other organizations, individuals, businesses that are supportive of mental health issues such as your local American Psychiatric Association local chapter, researchers at universities. Reach out to these groups to see if they will join you in implementing your plan.

9. Keep your friends close and your enemies closer.

Know the opposition. Find out who is not supportive of mental health issues. Brief them on your issues. See if you can find common ground and persuade them to help you with your cause.

10. Keep an eye on the prize.

Keep your eye on the legislation. Learn about the legislative process. (See attachment of how a bill becomes a law.) Identify which key committees you should watch. Clip news articles on upcoming legislation related to mental health.

11. Host a get together.

Conduct a Brown Bag Lunch for legislative staffers to educate them about your issues. You can also do a panel discussion or a "get to know each other" meeting.

12. Stay in touch.

Conduct a letter writing campaign. Start phoning others to call their legislators. Again refer to your message points. You should all be saying the same thing.

13. Testify.

Call the Secretary of your State Senate or the Clerk of the House of Representatives to find out about upcoming committee and subcommittee hearings on Parity. Contact the appropriate committees and arrange to provide experts (medical professionals, patients, family members, celebrities) to testify.

14. Find a legislator that has a personal reason to become involved.

Do you know of a legislator who has a child/relative with mental illness? If so, enlist their help. Ask if they would help you pass important mental health legislation.

15. Use the media to get your message out.

Follow stories in your local paper on mental health issues. Who is the reporter covering the story? Keep a log of reporters and what stories they have reported on. Contact them and compliment them on a story and tell them you have an issue you think they'd be interested in. Use a personal story to hook them. Or write a letter to the editor talking about the legislation and why it should become a law.

16. Don't get discouraged!

Sometimes it takes years and a lot of work to get a bill passed. Don't get discouraged, this is how the system works. Try some of the tactics mentioned above or create others you think will work.

Make Your Voice Heard

Tips for Communicating with Legislators

1. Register to vote

2. Vote in every election

3. Some general tips for communicating with legislators:

- **Keep it brief**, whether in person or in a letter (2 pages max).
- **Stay on message**; you can't convince them if you confuse them.
- Do not be overly emotional.
- **Learn about the legislator's background and constituency**. Check his/her voting record on similar issues. Use this information to frame your argument.
- Find out the **name of the legislative aide** that works on your issue and get to know him/her.
- Do not just contact them to complain or ask for something; **compliment** them if they do something you appreciate.

4. Can't I just send e-mail?

- A snail mail letter is still the best for state legislators, some legislators are not very computer literate and do not open their own e-mail. *The new exception is for federal legislators, don't send through U.S. mail because it may not be delivered. Send a fax or through Fed-X or other service.*
- **Do not use canned letters** from advocacy groups; write something in your own words. A legislator will discount a group of letters that all sound alike.
- **Visits** make the biggest impression, you can go to Washington or wait until they are in the district
- **Attend hearings** if you can. Submit written testimony whether you go or not.
- **Write letters to the editor**

5. Get involved.

- If you have money and believe in the candidate, donate.
- If money is a problem but you want to support the candidate, volunteer to stuff envelopes, work phone banks, distribute literature.....

6. Helpful Web Pages

- White House: www.whitehouse.gov
- Department of Health and Human Services: www.dhhs.gov
- Department of Labor: www.dol.gov
- Department of Veterans' Affairs: www.va.gov
- Department of Housing and Urban Development: www.hud.gov
- Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services: <http://cms.hhs.gov>
- Equal Employment Opportunities Commission: www.eeoc.gov

- National Council on Disability: www.ncd.gov
- National Institute for Mental Health: www.nimh.nih.gov
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration: www.samhsa.gov
- U.S. House of Representatives: www.house.gov
- U.S. Senate: www.senate.gov
- Congressional Record and Code of Federal Regulations: www.access.gpo.gov
- THOMAS (legislative information on the net): <http://thomas.loc.gov>
- Library of Congress: www.loc.gov
- Project Vote Smart: www.vote-smart.org

Talking Points for Meetings with Legislators

Use these talking points when meeting with legislators. This information can also help you develop testimony for committee or subcommittee hearings on mood disorders/mental illness.

Equal treatment:

- ✓ Through scientific research, it is proven that severe mental illnesses such as bipolar disorder and major depression are physical disorders like Alzheimer's disease or Parkinson's.
- ✓ Altered brain chemistry, structure and functioning, as well as genes, are among the causes of brain disorders. For example, imbalances in the chemicals serotonin, dopamine and norepinephrine and their receptors have been linked to brain disorders such as depression and schizophrenia.
- ✓ Advanced imaging technology and other methods have pinpointed structural differences in the brains of individuals with brain disorders.
- ✓ It is scientifically clear that mood disorders are not caused by bad character, poor child-rearing or an individual's behavior.
- ✓ People should not be blamed for their illness. A mood disorder is a real, medical illness – not a character flaw or a personal weakness – a person cannot just snap out of it.
- ✓ It's time for legislators and policymakers to take notice and respond to the scientific discoveries of the past few years. We don't deny people access to the latest treatments for cancer or heart disease. We shouldn't deny access to people who have a physical disorder which affects the brain. It's just a different part of the body – the brain deserves the same respect as the heart.

Discrimination:

- ✓ Discrimination, whatever the form is WRONG. Mental illness is just like any other medical illness; treatment is successful and cost effective. The passage of mental health parity legislation will help end benefit discrimination that currently exists against people with mental illness.
- ✓ Americans with mental illness face serious discrimination. Individuals with brain disorders often cannot obtain adequate health insurance coverage.
- ✓ Nearly 98% of private sector health insurance plans impose some form of unfair discriminatory limits on mental illness treatment, such as higher co-payments, fewer allowable outpatient and inpatient days
- ✓ Individuals with brain disorder often cannot obtain adequate health insurance coverage. Many insurance companies exercise the "pre-existing condition" clause,
- ✓ Research indicates that if you have health insurance, 90 percent of insurance companies offer lesser benefits for brain disorders than for other physical conditions.

- ✓ Typically, hospitalization is unlimited for other physical disorders, while it is limited to 30 to 60 days for a brain disorder.
- ✓ This discrimination and increased financial burden often prevent people with brain disorders from getting the treatment they need, even though this treatment is often more effective than treatment for many other medical illnesses.

Treatment does work:

- ✓ Treatment of brain disorders does work. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, the current success rates for treating severe forms of brain disorders are 65% for bipolar disorder and for major depression the rate is 80 percent.
- ✓ The success rate for treating brain disorders are often far better than they are for many other medical conditions. For example, the overall success rate of some commonly used treatments for cardiovascular disease is only 45 to 50 percent.
- ✓ Treatment can help people live healthy, productive lives.

The Cost of Treating Brain Disorders is Comparable or Less than the Cost of Treating Many Other Medical Conditions:

- ✓ Brain disorders affect a much smaller percentage of the population than many other physical illnesses. In any given year, about 2.8 percent adults in the U.S., or five million Americans suffer from a severe form of a brain disorder, while 18 percent are affected by heart disease.
- ✓ The cost of treating brain disorder is comparable to or less than the cost of treating many other medical illnesses.
- ✓ A 1998 study by the UNUM Life Insurance Company and Johns Hopkins University found that employer plans with good access to outpatient mental health services have lower psychiatric disability claims costs than plans with more restrictive arrangements.

The High Costs to Society of Untreated and Undertreated mental illnesses is Well- Documented:

- ✓ A National Institute of Mental Health sponsored study revealed that mental and addictive disorders cost over \$300 billion annually. This includes productivity losses of \$150 billion, health care costs of \$70 billion and other costs (e.g., criminal justice) of \$80 billion.
- ✓ In 1990, our nation's direct medical care costs and indirect costs from mental illnesses, alcohol, and drug abuse totaled more than \$313 billion. That was more than cancer (\$104 billion in 1987), respiratory disease (\$99 billion in 1990), AIDS (\$66 billion in 1991), or coronary artery disease (\$43 billion in 1987).

Parity in Mental Illness Coverage Could Help States Save Money:

- ✓ In its 1993 landmark report to the Congress, the National Mental Health Advisory Council concluded that parity coverage for severe mental illnesses would result in a net savings of \$2.2 billion a year. It stated, "The enormous but often hidden costs of untreated or undertreated severe mental illnesses which are now borne by the general health care system and society at large, can be appreciably reduced."
- ✓ A State of California study (1994) demonstrated that for every \$1 spent to treat alcohol and drug disorders, taxpayers were saved \$7 in future costs. Savings of \$1.5 billion were largely due to reductions in health care costs and crime

Providing Health Insurance Coverage for Brain Disorders is Affordable:

- ✓ Parity will NOT be unduly costly. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) has projected that enactment of H.R. 953 and S. 486 would result in premium increases of only 0.9%. Experience in the states which have passed parity laws closely mirrors the CBO projections.
- ✓ The Office of Personnel Management characterized the argument that the cost of mental health parity is prohibitive and would result in fewer people having insurance as an "apparent myth."
- ✓ It is estimated that, if all adults received access to equal coverage (Mental Health Parity) for brain disorders, the employer-paid premiums would only increase by 1.5 percent each month, typically \$1 per month per employee.
- ✓ In states with parity for brain disorders, the costs have been minimal. In Texas, the total cost for treating employees with brain disorders was \$2.47 per person per month.
- ✓ In Rhode Island, the increased premium costs were just 30 cents per person each month.
- ✓ When the Kennecott Copper Corporation provided mental health counseling for employees, its hospital, medical and surgical costs decreased 48.9 percent.
- ✓ In addition, as an increasing number of people receive treatment, the overall costs to society will be reduced.
- ✓ Opponents entirely ignore both the compelling data on how little parity costs and the reality that workers with untreated mental illness add some \$70 billion annually to employer costs through absenteeism, turnover and retraining expenses, lower productivity, and increased medical costs. Mental Health Parity can be expected to increase productivity and economic gain.
- ✓ There are many indirect costs to society resulting from mental illness, including lost productivity, increased use of general medical services, crime/incarceration and use of social welfare benefits.



Depression and Bipolar
Support Alliance

Legislative Glossary

The glossary is designed to familiarize you with many of the terms and definitions used within the Legislative Assembly.

Administrative Rule: Any agency directive, standard, regulation or statement of general applicability that implements, interprets or prescribes law or policy, or describes the procedure or practice requirements of any agency. (ORS 183.310{8})

Agenda: The official work plan for a committee meeting.

Act: A bill which has been made law by passing both houses of the Legislature, and which either has been signed by the Governor, filed without the Governor's signature, or passed by both houses of the Legislature over the Governor's veto.

Amendment: An alteration made or proposed to be made to a measure. Measures may be amended more than once. (*See also "gut and stuff"*)

Appropriation: A sum of money designated for a particular purpose by an act. For example: an *appropriations* bill funds a state agency over the upcoming biennium.

Bar: The bar is the railing along the sides of the House and Senate chambers which separates the chamber floor (see *Floor*) and the side aisle. Only legislators and certain legislative staff may be within the bar; only invited guests and staff may occupy the side aisles. The press is allowed both within the bar (in the press area) and in the side aisles.

Bill: A measure that creates new law, amends or repeals existing law, appropriates money, prescribes fees, transfers functions from one agency to another, provides penalties, or takes other action.

Call of the House/Call of the Senate: A Call of the House or Senate is a means of compelling all members (unless they are excused) of that chamber to present themselves for a vote on a particular matter. If it comes time for a vote, and it appears to members that other members are not present in the chamber, a motion from the floor directs the presiding officer to issue a call of the House or Senate.

The call empowers the sergeant at arms to lock the chamber, preventing those present from leaving, and requires the Sergeant at Arms to bring in absent members—under arrest, if necessary—for the vote.

Capital: Refers to the capital city of the state: Salem is the *capital* of Oregon.

Capitol: The Statehouse, or Capitol building. Its address is: 900 Court St. NE., Salem, OR, 97301.

Caucus: "Caucus" is used as both a noun and a verb. A *caucus*, n., is a group of people who share something in common (e.g. they are members of the same political party, such as the Senate Republican Caucus or the House Democratic Caucus, or come from the same area of the state, such as the Coastal Caucus or the Eastern Oregon Caucus, or share something else in common, such as the Freshman Caucus or the Women's Caucus). When these people *caucus*, v., they meet to address their group's policy questions and to select political candidates for office, or political party leaders. Both major party caucuses have meeting rooms in the Capitol.

Chair: The legislator appointed by the Speaker of the House or the President of the Senate to preside over an individual committee; for example: the *Chair* of the Ways and Means Committee.

Chairperson, Committee: See above.

Chief Clerk of the House: The chief administrative officer of the House of Representatives. The Chief Clerk is elected by all the members of the House, and is responsible for keeping records of the proceedings of the House, supervising House employees, acting as parliamentarian of the House and advising members on parliamentary procedures, and preparing all House publications for printing.

"Christmas Tree" Bill: A "Christmas Tree" bill is generally passed late in a legislative session and contains funding for particular projects. It gains its name from the "ornaments" that are attached to attract votes.

Committee Administrator: The staff "manager" of a committee, responsible for bill management, meeting logistics, assembling background materials and information, and bill analysis.

Committee Counsel: Another name for a committee administrator who is an attorney. Some committees, such as the Judiciary Committee, require that their administrators be licensed attorneys.

Committee Records: Located in Room 453 of the Capitol, the Committee Records Office responds to requests for information by providing copies of minutes, exhibits, and audio tapes of legislative committee meetings.

Committee Report: A one-page report made to the Speaker of the House or the President of the Senate by a standing, special, or conference committee, which recommends further action on a measure, or reports the measure without recommendation.

Committee Services: The unit of LA which provides non-partisan, ongoing staff research, policy analysis, and committee staff support to the Legislative Assembly.

Concurrent Resolution: A measure affecting actions or procedures of both houses of the Legislature. A concurrent resolution is used to express sympathy, commendation, or to commemorate the dead.

Conflict: A conflict occurs when two or more bills amend or repeal the same ORS section, although there may be no *substantive* conflict in the proposed legislation. The Oregon Constitution allows the compilation of more than one amendment unless the amendments conflict in purpose.

Constituent: A citizen residing within the district of a legislator (or other elected official).

Current Service Level: A budgetary term that refers to any budget proposal which requests future funding for service provision "at the current level." The current service level will reflect changes due to inflation, labor contract changes, caseload changes, and any other changes required to continue to provide the same level of service.

Digest: The brief measure summary found at the top of a bill. The digest is written by Legislative Counsel.

District: A geographical area designated for representation by a senator and/or representative. Legislative districts are drawn to ensure that a nearly equal number of constituents reside in each legislator's district, and are re-drawn by a specially-appointed legislative committee every ten years to accurately reflect changes in population.

Emergency Board: The joint committee of senators and representatives that meets during interim periods to address state fiscal and budgetary matters.

Emergency Clause: A statement added to the end of a measure which causes the act to become effective before the accustomed date. An emergency clause either sets a specific date or is effective immediately, which means that the measure will take effect on the date of its signature into law. NOTE: *emergency clauses may not be attached to bills which would raise revenue.*

Engrossed Bill: A measure that is printed with its amendments included. Such a bill will have "A (or B or C, etc.) Engrossed" printed at the top, which is a signal to

legislators before a vote that the bill before them has changed from its original version.

Enrolled Bill: A final copy of a bill which has passed both houses of the Legislature and has been specially reprinted in preparation for the signatures of the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House. After these confirmatory signatures, the enrolled bill goes to the Governor.

Exhibit: Anything submitted for the record which supplements a witness' oral testimony. An exhibit can also be a copy of a witness' oral testimony.

First Reading: The recitation on the chamber floor of the measure number, title, and sponsor by the reading clerk upon introduction of a measure in either house (sponsor name is read only in the Senate; the House reads just measure number and title). After the first reading, the measure is referred to committee by the Speaker or President. According to House rules, a bill must go to a relevant substantive committee.

Floor: The area within the bar in both the House and Senate Chambers.

Floor Personnel: This term refers to staff who work in either the Senate or the House chamber. Floor personnel include the sergeants-at-arms, the distribution manager, pages, and doorkeepers.

General Election: An election involving most or all constituencies in a state (or nation) in choosing candidates for office and voting on ballot measures. In Oregon, the general election is held on the first Tuesday following a Monday in November.

Germane-ness: "Germane" means "appropriate, relevant, pertinent." As the term is used in the Oregon Legislature, "germane-ness" refers to whether or not a concept or idea fits into a bill. It is a different way of talking about Oregon's "one-subject" rule, which states that bills may only address one subject. (See *Relating-to Clause*.)

Hearing: A public meeting of a legislative committee held for the purpose of taking testimony concerning proposed legislation.

House of Representatives: The legislative body of 435 members, called representatives, who are elected every two years.

"Indefinitely Postponed": A motion from the floor to postpone further consideration of a bill, without identifying a time certain for further consideration. In the majority of cases, bills that are indefinitely postponed are not heard again.

Interim: The period of time between two sessions of the Legislative Assembly.

Interim Committee: A legislative committee authorized by the Legislative Assembly to study a particular subject or subjects between sessions. Interim committees are appointed by leadership after the end of session.

Initiative: A system of direct legislation by the people. Approved in 1902, it allows the citizenry of Oregon to propose new laws or change the State Constitution through a general election ballot measure. To place an initiative on the ballot, supporters must obtain a specified number of signatures from registered voters. The number required is determined by a fixed percentage of the votes cast for all candidates for governor at the general election preceding the filing of the petition. Initiative petitions for statutory enactments require six percent, currently 66,786 signatures. (*See also: Referendum*)

Joint Committee: A legislative committee composed of members of both houses. NOTE: Committees may also *meet jointly*: that is, two committees may meet simultaneously, for example, to hear testimony on matters of interest to both committees. Such a meeting does not constitute a joint committee.

Joint Legislative Guide: A directory listing the names and office locations of all members, names and room locations of all committees, a Capitol floor plan, telephone numbers, and other pertinent legislative information.

Joint Resolution: A measure used for proposing constitutional amendments, creating interim committees, giving direction to a state agency, expressing legislative approval of action taken by someone else, or authorizing a kind of temporary action to be taken. A joint resolution may also authorize expenditures out of the legislative expense appropriations.

Journal: The edited record of all the proceedings on the floors of both houses, published after each legislative session.

Leadership: The presiding elected officers of each house: the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House. (*See also Legislative Leadership*) They are elected by all the members of each chamber when the body organizes for a legislative session following a general election. On occasion, "leadership" also refers to the majority and minority leaders, who are elected by their respective caucuses.

Legislative Leadership: The presiding elected officers of each house: the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House. (*See also Leadership*)

Legislative Publications and Distribution Services: A section of Facility Services popularly known as "distribution" or "the bill room," this legislative service unit receives all printed measures, measure status reports, and digests from the State Printer and distributes these publications to legislators and members of the public on call or by mail upon request. A small supply of basic office supplies is stocked for purchase by Capitol occupants.

Lobbyist: A person who is employed by an organization to represent its interests before the Legislature.

Majority Leader: A legislator elected by his or her peers to lead the party having the majority in his or her house. The majority leader is responsible for the development and implementation of the caucus agenda.

Measure: A written document used by the Legislative Assembly to propose a law or to express itself as a body. A measure may be a bill, a memorial, or a resolution.

Minority Leader: A legislator elected by his or her peers to lead the party in the minority in his or her house. The minority leader is responsible for the development and implementation of the caucus agenda.

Minutes: A written record of the proceedings of a committee. By Oregon statute, the official record of a meeting is the tape recording of its proceedings; the written record accompanying it serves as an index to the contents of the tapes.

Motion: The formal way of directing debate on the floor. It is the way, for example, that a member introduces a measure for debate on the floor.

Parliamentary Inquiry: An inquiry of the committee chair, in committee, or of the presiding officer on the floor, concerning parliamentary process.

Passage: Favorable action on a measure before either house.

Point of Order: A motion from the floor or from a committee member calling attention to a breach of order or a breach of rules.

President of the Senate: The presiding officer of the Senate, elected by all members of the Senate when the Senate organizes for a regular legislative session.

President Pro Tempore: President "for a time": a Senator elected to serve as the temporary President in the absence of the President of the Senate.

Primary Election: A preliminary election in which only the registered voters of a political party nominate candidates for office. A political party may allow registered independents to vote in a primary election.

Propositions and Motions: A customary, traditional order of business on the floor where legislators may make a motion if they wish. Otherwise, motions cannot be made until the third reading of a bill.

Quorum: The number of members required to be present before business can be transacted in the House, Senate, or a committee. In the House, 40 members must be present; in the Senate, 20 members; and in committees a constitutional majority constitutes a quorum. (NOTE: *according to House and Senate Rules, if a quorum is not present, the chair can convene the committee as a subcommittee for the purposes of taking testimony ONLY.*)

Reconsideration: Taking a second vote on a measure after a motion to do so. A bill may be *reconsidered* by a committee after being voted out of committee, if it has not yet been dropped at the desk. A vote on a bill may also be reconsidered on the floor.

Refer: To direct a bill to a committee: HB 2000 was *referred* to the Ways and Means Committee. Bill referrals are made by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House.

Referendum: The submission of a law, proposed by the Legislature or already in effect, to a direct vote of the people. In Oregon, both houses of the Legislature must vote to refer a statute or constitutional amendment for a popular vote. Such referrals cannot be vetoed by the governor. In addition, to place a referendum on the ballot, supporters must obtain a specified number of signatures from registered voters. The number required is determined by a fixed percentage of the votes cast for all candidates for governor at the general election preceding the filing of the petition. Referendum petitions require four percent, currently 44,524 signatures. (See also: *Initiative*)

Resolution: A measure used by the House or the Senate (a measure used by both would be a *joint resolution*) to take an action that would affect only its own members, such as appointing a committee of its members, or expressing an opinion or sentiment on a matter of public interest.

Roll Call: A recitation by the reading clerk of each legislator's name, done at the beginning of a floor session, or during a call of the House or Senate, for the purposes of identifying those present.

Rules: The guidelines by which the Senate, the House of Representatives, or a committee governs its meetings. Rules are formally adopted at the first convening of the Legislative Assembly or of a committee, and require a vote (with at least a quorum of members present) for official adoption.

Second Reading: Like the First Reading, a recitation of the measure's number, title, and sponsor by the reading clerk (in the House, just the measure number and

title are read). Second Reading occurs after the measure has been referred to committee, worked on, and reported back to the floor (in the house where it originated) for a vote.

Secretary of the Senate: The chief administrative officer of the Senate. The Secretary of the Senate is elected by all the members of the Senate, and is responsible for keeping records of the proceedings of the Senate, supervising Senate employees, acting as parliamentarian of the Senate and advising members on parliamentary procedures, and preparing all Senate publications for printing.

Senate: The legislative body consisting of 100 members, who are elected for a six-year term.

Sergeant at Arms: A non-legislator selected (elected in the Senate, appointed in the House) to maintain order within that chamber.

Session: The period of time in which the Legislative Assembly officially convenes. The regular session begins on the second Monday in January of every odd-numbered year. Special sessions may be convened at the call of the Governor or of a majority of the members of the Legislative Assembly.

Speaker of the House: The presiding officer of the House of Representatives, elected by all members of the House when it convenes for a regular legislative session.

Speaker Pro Tempore: Speaker "for a time": a representative elected to serve as the temporary Speaker in the absence of the Speaker of the House.

Special (select) committee: A committee authorized by Senate or House Rules to study a limited subject.

Special Session: A convening of the Legislature called by the Governor or a majority of the members of the Legislative Assembly, at a time other than during a regular session. Typically, special sessions of the Legislature are called for the purpose of addressing a specific problem or issue.

Sponsor: The legislator or legislative committee which introduces a measure. The name of this person or committee is printed at the top of the measure.

Standing Committee: A permanent committee during a session authorized and named by Senate or House Rules.

Statute: A codified law. (NOTE: "Codify" means "to arrange laws systematically." A codified law is one that has been incorporated into that section of the ORS that it amends, modifies, or accompanies.)

Statutory Committee: A legislative committee established by statute.

Subcommittee: A subordinate committee composed of members appointed by the chair (or by House or Senate leadership) from the full committee. A subcommittee will consider a narrower range of topics than the full committee, and generally is authorized only to make recommendations to the full committee.

Substitute Measure: A measure submitted by a standing committee as a substitute for a measure referred to it. It is treated in the same manner as is an amendment if it is germane to the title and subject of the original measure.

Summary: The measure summary or digest found printed near the top of a bill.

Sunset Clause: A statement added to the end of a measure which causes the act to "sunset," or become ineffective, after a certain date.

Table: "Table" is used as both a noun and a verb. *Tables*, n., are found at the back of the calendars, and display legislative information in a variety of ways. *Table*, v., is used in reference to stopping bills from further action in committees or on the floor: a bill is *tabled* by a vote, after a non-debatable motion from a member.

Third Reading: As in First or Second Readings, a recitation of a measure's number, title, and sponsor (in the House, just the measure number and title are read) by the reading clerk on the floor before consideration by either house, usually done before a final vote.

Veto: An action of the President in disapproval of a measure that has passed both houses. If the President does not like a bill, he can [veto](#) it. There are two ways that he can veto a bill. First, the President can send the bill back to Congress unsigned. In most cases, he will also send a list of reasons he does not like the bill. Second, the President can "pocket" the bill. After ten days, one of two things happens: 1) if Congress is in session, the bill becomes a law anyway 2) if Congress has adjourned, the bill does not become law and the President has used a "[pocket veto](#)".

When the President vetoes a bill, it will most likely never become a law. Congress can override a veto, but to do so two-thirds of both the House of Representatives and the Senate must vote against the President.

Vice-Chair: A committee member chosen by the Speaker or President to serve as the committee chair in the chair's absence.

Vote Explanation: On occasion, a legislator may wish the official record to reflect the reason why he or she voted yes or no on a particular bill. This *vote explanation* is found in the Journal, following the vote record of a bill.

Whip: A term used at the federal level to refer to the deputy majority leader. It derives from the British fox-hunting term "whipper-in," which described the person responsible for keeping the foxhounds from leaving the pack. Some, but not all, of the caucuses in the Oregon Legislature use the term "whip" in reference to the deputy majority or minority leader.

Witness: A person who testifies before a legislative committee.

Mental Health Links

Organization	Web address
American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry	www.aacap.org
American Mental Health Counselor Association	www.amcha.org
American Psychiatric Association	www.psych.org
American Psychological Association	www.apa.org
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law	www.bazelon.org
Children and Adults with ADHD	www.chadd.org
Consumer Organization and Networking Technical Assistance Center	www.contac.org/national.htm
Depression/Bipolar Support Alliance	www.dbsalliance.org
Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health	www.ffcmh.org
International Association of Psychosocial Rehabilitation	www.iapsrs.org
National Alliance for the Mentally Ill--Youth	www.nami.org/youth
National Association of County Behavioral Health	www.nacbhd.org
National Association of School Psychologists	www.nasponline.org
National Center for Injury Prevention and Control	www.cdc.gov/ncipc/
National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare	www.nccbh.org
National Empowerment Center	www.power2u.org
National Institute of Mental Health	www.nimh.nih.gov
National Mental Health Association	www.nmha.org
National Mental Health Consumers Self-Help Clearinghouse	www.mhselfhelp.org
Natl. Assoc. of State Mental Health Program Directors	www.nasmhpd.org
SAMHSA's Natl. Mental Health Information Center	www.mentalhealth.org
Screening for Mental Health, Inc.	www.mentalhealthscreening.org
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration	www.samhsa.org
Suicide Prevention Action Network	www.spanusa.org
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services	www.hhs.gov

To find out more about advocacy opportunities in your state, contact DBSA External Relations at Media@DBSAAlliance.org