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HR Policy Association Applauds Senate Finance Committee Hearing on Behavioral and Mental Health

The Association and the American Health Policy Institute Recommends the Labor Department Significantly Improve Its Parity Guidance Before Congress Enacts Civil Monetary Penalties

WASHINGTON, D.C. – HR Policy Association and the American Health Policy Institute, releases its statement for the record today for the U.S. Senate Finance Committee hearing on “Behavioral Health Care When Americans Need It: Ensuring Parity and Care Integration.”

HR Policy Association is the leading organization representing chief human resource officers of 400 of the largest employers in the United States. Collectively, their companies provide health care coverage to over 20 million employees and dependents in the United States. The American Health Policy Institute, a part of the Association, examines the challenges employers face in providing health care to their employees and recommends policy solutions to promote affordable, high-quality, employer-based health care. The Institute serves to provide thought leadership grounded in the practical experience of America’s largest employers.

D. Mark Wilson, president and CEO of the American Health Policy Institute and vice president, health & employment policy of HR Policy Association said, “Employers have significantly invested new behavioral health benefits during the COVID pandemic. Before enacting punitive legislative provisions like civil monetary penalties, the Department of Labor must publish the parity guidance Congress required the Department to provide to employers under the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 (CAA). It is simply unfair to penalize employers, before the Department provides this guidance.”

To ensure mental health parity and care integration compliance, the Association and Institute’s statement urges Congress to:

- Encourage DOL to publish the guidance required by the CAA and additional de-identified examples of comparative parity analyses that are compliant;
- Enact the bipartisan Collaborate in an Orderly and Cohesive Manner Act (H.R. 5218) to promote the uptake of the collaborative care model by providing grant funding to remove the barriers that primary care practices face when trying to implement the model;
- Eliminate restrictions that impede an employer’s ability to provide employees with telehealth services; and
- Expand the use of measurement-based care.

“We look forward to working with the Senate and other policymakers on this important topic as they develop their bipartisan legislation this year to improve access to behavioral and mental health care services,” said Mr. Wilson.

To read the full comment letter, visit:

<https://www.hrpolicy.org/HRPolicy/media/Healthcare/2022/03/22-06-Statement-for-the-Record-Sen-Fin-Mental-Health-and-Parity-Hearing.pdf>

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HR Policy Association is the lead organization representing chief human resource officers of major employers. The Association consists of more than 400 of the largest corporations doing business in the United States and globally, and these employers are represented in the organization by their most senior human resource executive. Collectively, their companies employ more than 11 million employees in the United States, over nine percent of the private sector workforce, and 20 million employees worldwide. They have a combined market capitalization of more than \$8 trillion. These senior corporate officers participate in the Association because of their commitment to improving the direction of human resource policy. Their objective is to use the combined power of the membership to act as a positive influence to better public policy, the HR marketplace, and the human resource profession. For more information visit www.hrpolicy.org.

American Health Policy Institute is a non-partisan non-profit think tank that examines the practical implications of health policy changes through the lens of large employers. The Institute examines the challenges employers face in providing health care to their employees and recommends policy solutions to promote the provision of affordable, high-quality, employer-based health care. The Institute serves to provide thought leadership grounded in the practical experience of America’s largest employers. Their mission is to develop impactful strategies to ensure that those purchasing health care are able to not only bend the cost curve, but actually break it, by keeping health care cost inflation in line with general inflation. americanhealthpolicy.org.