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Friday, July 2, 2010

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**Rep. Matsui Introduces Legislation to Invest in Mental Health Safety Net**

**WASHINGTON, D.C.**— Today, Congresswoman Doris Matsui (D-CA) announced she has introduced legislation to enhance Medicaid funding for organizations, clinics, and health centers that offer community-based treatment and support for millions of poor and vulnerable people with mental and addiction disorders. H.R. 5636, the Mental Health and Addictions Safety Net Equity Act, would establish a network of Federally Qualified Behavioral Health Centers (FQBHCs) across the country and would provide these new FQBHCs with cost-based reimbursement through the Medicaid program. This would allow behavioral health organizations and clinics across Sacramento to keep their doors open, and would help them provide the right care at the right time to all in need without struggling with low or uncertain reimbursements.

“It is time for mental health to be treated on a level playing field with the rest of our nation’s health care system,” stated Rep. Matsui. “The federal government must step up to the plate to protect the mental health and addiction safety net, which has been struggling so mightily in Sacramento. Investing in mental health and addictions treatment can save our economy the many billions we now spend on emergency room visits, incarceration, and lost productivity. Federal funding for these essential services is the only option to protect against decimation of services in Sacramento due to state budget struggles, which is why I am proud to be the sponsor of H.R. 5636.”

Rusty Selix, Executive Director of the Mental Health Association in California, added “Mental Health leaders in Sacramento and across the nation applaud Congresswoman Doris Matsui for introducing H.R. 5636. This legislation will eliminate one of the few remaining areas of healthcare law in which mental health and addiction treatment does not have equal standing with physical healthcare. The legislation recognizes that federally qualified behavioral healthcare centers are essential to the basic health safety net. These facilities are the only places which offer the type of comprehensive care that people with severe mental illnesses need and make the difference between someone being able to recover and lead a productive life versus being without care and at risk of homelessness and hospitalizations due to the chronic underfunding of these programs.”

Selix continued, “The current crisis in Sacramento County mental health programs and similar severe cuts taking place in other communities and California and other states would not be happening if H.R. 5636 were already the law. This is one of the most important pieces of mental

health legislation ever and we look forward to working with Congresswoman Matsui for its passage”

The Matsui legislation is supported by numerous mental health advocacy organizations, including the National Alliance on Mental Illness, the National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare, the Mental Health Association in California, and the California Council of Community Mental Health Agencies.

Rep. Eliot Engel (D-NY) is an original co-sponsor of the legislation. To view the text of H.R. 5636, please click [here](#) .

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