



WISCONSIN STATE SENATOR
DAVE HANSEN
 SENATOR – 30TH DISTRICT
 ASSISTANT MAJORITY LEADER

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Wisconsin Mental Health and Substance Abuse Parity Act Passes Senate Committee
Forum on Making Mental Health Parity Real to be held at NWTC on January 15th

MADISON—Senate Bill 362 was recommended for passage today on a bi-partisan vote by the Senate Committee on Health, Health Insurance, Privacy, Property Tax Relief, and Revenue—legislation authored by Senator Dave Hansen (D-Green Bay) known as the Wisconsin Mental Health and Substance Abuse Parity Act.

The same bill was recommended for passage by the Assembly Committee on Health and Healthcare Reform last week.

“I’m happy to see that committees now in both houses of the Legislature have finally recognized that this is a fairness issue” said Hansen, who has been working on this legislation since 2001. “Mental illness strikes one out of four Americans at some point in their lives. Nobody, regardless of age, race or economic status is immune.”

Senator Hansen pointed out that treating mental illness early on, saves money for businesses and taxpayers by reducing the need for emergency room visits and the cost of incarceration. “People suffering from mental illness when properly treated are able to lead productive lives, maintain employment and have a better quality of life,” said Hansen, “rather than being moved into the criminal justice system or onto the streets.”

Senator Hansen also invites the public to attend a symposium on January 15th with Representative Sandy Pasch (Assembly author and a psychiatric nurse) and an expert panel to discuss their views on changes needed to improve mental health treatment in the state, including issues such as the quantity, availability and location of treatment and strategies to address stigma and other barriers to receiving mental health and addiction treatment. Panelists will include area treatment providers, advocates, the recovery community, consumers and law enforcement officials.

“Making Parity Real” will be held in Green Bay from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Friday, Jan. 15, 2010 at the Northeast Wisconsin Technical College Lecture Hall, Student Center Building Room 128 (2740 W. Mason St., Green Bay). Attendance is free but registration is required by Jan. 13, 2010. For more information and to register visit www.MakingParityReal.org.

“Making Parity Real will serve as the forum for discussion on our ability to access care and how we can ensure that resources are available to support that care. Mental health parity is good for business, good for families and good for our communities. I look forward to working with my colleagues in both the Senate and Assembly to get this legislation to the Governor’s desk.”

Committees

Joint Committee on Finance, Senate Vice Chair
 Education
 Transportation, Tourism, Forestry and Natural Resources
 Special Committee on State-Tribal Relations
 Senate Organization
 Joint Committee on Legislative Organization

State Capitol

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