



August 23, 2006

Patricia A. Maryland, Chair
Citizens' Health Care Working Group
7201 Wisconsin Avenue
Suite 575
Bethesda, MD 20814
CitizensHealth@ahrq.gov

Dear Ms. Maryland:

The Clinical Social Work Association would like to write in support of the recommendations being made by the Citizen's Health Care Working Group (CHCWG). The Association represents many of the over 200,000 licensed clinical social workers providing over 41% of mental health services in the country (CSWF, 2005.)

The Association's primary concern is continuing to improve access to mental health services and integrate these services with medical services for physical health care. We were very pleased to see the following Recommendation: "Define a 'core' benefit package for all Americans...to include physical, mental, and dental health." The Association would like to continue discussions on what an adequate mental health benefit would look like.

As a facilitator for the Seattle CHCWG meeting in February this year, I was able to witness first hand the excitement and thoughtfulness of the 300 participants in the Seattle portion of this process.

Please feel free to contact me at lwgroshong@comcast.net or 206-524-3690 for any assistance I can offer on the mental health perspective regarding these recommendations.

Sincerely,

Laura W. Groshong, Director, Government Relations
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206-524-3690

Cc: Richard P. Yanes, Executive Director, Clinical Social Work Association