

Date: December 7, 2016

To: SPTA and Division Federal Advocacy Coordinators, and APAGS Coordinators

From: Doug Walter, J.D., Associate Executive Director for Government Relations,
Psychological Association Practice Organization

Cc: Katherine Nordal, Ph.D., Executive Director for Professional Practice
SPTA Directors of Professional Affairs
SPTA Executive Directors
CAPP
APAPO Board of Directors

Re: **Victory! Congress Passes Mental Health Reform**

You did it! Today the Senate voted 94-5 to pass federal mental health reform, as a part of the 21st Century Cures legislation. This follows up on a 392-26 vote last week by the U.S. House of Representatives. President Obama is expected to sign this legislation into law. Because of your efforts psychologists from around the country sent over 8,000 messages to Congress, urging their legislators to pass mental health reform.

This new law strengthens enforcement of federal mental health parity laws, eliminates the Medicaid same day exclusion rule (which prohibits separate payment for mental health and primary care services provided to a Medicaid enrollee on the same day), improves how mental health issues are responded to in the criminal justice system, creates and reauthorizes a wide range of federal mental health and substance use treatment and prevention grant programs, and clarifies health information privacy protections for patients with mental illnesses. Thank you for your work in gaining passage of this legislation.

Our work is not done. President-elect Donald Trump and Congress are planning to repeal core parts of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and its protections in January. We will need your help to respond to these developments. Please stay tuned over the next few weeks, as we will be looking to take action on ACA repeal.

For more information, contact APA Practice Organization Government Relations Office at Pracgovt@apa.org or (202) 336-5889. Visit APA Practice Organization on-line at APAPracticeCentral.org/Advocacy.

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