



# *The Commonwealth of Massachusetts*

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133-1054

**RUTH B. BALSER**

STATE REPRESENTATIVE  
12TH MIDDLESEX DISTRICT  
NEWTON

**CHAIR**

Committee on Mental Health & Substance Abuse

ROOM 33, STATE HOUSE  
TEL. (617) 722-2060  
FAX. (617) 722-2849  
Rep.RuthBalsler@hou.state.ma.us

## **Representative Balsler announces mental health parity bill signed by Governor**

BOSTON, August 6, 2008 – Representative Ruth B. Balsler (D-Newton), announced that Governor Patrick signed into law legislation she authored to extend the requirements of health plans to provide insurance coverage for mental illness and addictions.

“This historic legislation is both health care expansion and civil rights legislation. It expands treatment for mentally ill and addicted individuals and ends discrimination against the people who suffer from these diseases”, noted Representative Balsler after a signing ceremony in the Governor's Council Chambers.

The new law builds on an earlier Mental Health Parity Act, Chapter 80 of the Acts of 2000, which required that health plans fully cover 9 conditions that constitute many of the most severe mental illnesses. Coverage of all the other mental health conditions were capped. The new law extends complete coverage to 4 additional serious conditions including substance abuse, post-traumatic stress disorders, eating disorders, and autism. The law also strengthens the ability of the Commissioner of the Department of Mental Health to add other conditions to the list of those that will be treated with full parity.

Enactment of this legislation was the result of efforts of many mental health consumers, providers, advocates, and legislators. The state's Department of Mental Health joined Representative Balsler in pushing for this legislation early in the session, signaling the new Governor's support.

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