



May 10, 2010

The Honorable Tim Pawlenty  
Office of the Governor  
130 State Capitol  
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Governor Pawlenty,

The Minnesota Psychiatric Society (MPS) has long supported federal parity as a means to ensure equal treatment of psychiatric illnesses with general medical illnesses. As a result, MPS strongly opposes recent Minnesota efforts to drastically cut funding for psychiatric and mental health services. While the current economic crisis requires belt-tightening throughout government, mental health and substance abuse services have been disproportionately cut under recent proposals. Psychiatric services have been historically under-funded resulting in a system starting with fewer resources to cut. The proposed cuts in effect will gut the state's mental health system, and negate national and state efforts to offer equitable treatment for mental illness and substance abuse. The state budget cuts would institutionalize bias against Minnesotans with severe life threatening mental illnesses if these cuts are enacted.

In the past the state legislature has recognized the folly of chronic under-funding, and long-term costs associated with limiting access to effective early identification and timely treatment of mental illness. They took action to remedy the situation. They realized that cuts in access and services resulted in increased costs and immeasurable human suffering over time. MPS implores this legislature to honor its pledge to represent *all* Minnesotans and fulfill its fiduciary responsibility to the state's long-term well being – not just balance the current budget. We encourage you to not enact any legislative proposal that disproportionately cuts state programs for the mentally ill. Don't turn your back on these fellow Minnesotans!

Yours truly,

George Dawson, MD  
President, Minnesota Psychiatric Society

CC: The Honorable Cal Ludeman, Commissioner, Department of Human Services  
The Honorable Larry Pogemiller, Minnesota State Senate  
The Honorable Linda Berglin, Minnesota State Senate  
The Honorable Richard Cohen, Minnesota State Senate  
The Honorable Margaret Anderson Kelliher, Minnesota State House of Representatives  
The Honorable Tony Sertich, Minnesota State House of Representatives  
The Honorable Tom Huntley, Minnesota State House of Representatives  
The Honorable Erin Murphy, Minnesota State House of Representatives  
The Honorable Paul Thissen, Minnesota State House of Representatives  
The Honorable Jim Abeler, Minnesota State House of Representatives