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KENNEDY, DOMENICI ANNOUNCE MENTAL HEALTH PARITY BREAKTHROUGH

WASHINGTON, D.C.--Tonight, Senators Edward M. Kennedy and Pete Domenici announced a breakthrough in Mental Health Parity negotiations. The new agreement will protect all state laws and provide equity in mental health treatment to 113 million Americans.

Senator Kennedy said, "Tonight a major agreement was reached with the mental health community, business leaders, the insurance industry and Senate leaders to ensure that those with mental health needs can receive fair and equitable health insurance. This new legislation will bring dramatic new help to millions of Americans who today are denied needed mental health care and treatment. Tonight's agreement underscores our commitment to treat those with dignity and respect patients facing all diseases."

Senator Domenici said, "The agreement reached tonight should allow us to move expeditiously to finally provide significant mental health parity to tens of millions of Americans and their loved ones. It will allow us to build on existing federal law to expand parity. I believe this package will be acceptable to a broad spectrum interests, from those who suffer from mental illnesses, to care givers, to insurance companies and the businesses that provide coverage for their employees."

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