



# MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF COLORADO

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## **SENATE BILL 36 MAKES ECONOMIC SENSE FOR BUSINESS IN COLORADO** *Appropriate Mental Health Insurance Coverage Improves Lives and the Bottom Line*

**DENVER, Colo.** February 5, 2007 – Mental illness is the leading cause of disability in the United States, today, resulting in 217 million days of work lost annually. This is more than many other chronic physical conditions including diabetes, asthma and arthritis. The estimated cost of lost productivity to Colorado businesses due to depression *alone* is calculated to be \$886 million a year. One study shows that every dollar invested in mental health coverage results in a return savings of 5 dollars to the bottom line. Senate Bill 36 is an important step in reducing monetary costs, improving productivity and improving quality of life for the workforce of this state.

The **Mental Health Association of Colorado (MHAC)** is the primary architect and advocate behind current legislation to require appropriate mental health care coverage for business owners employing more than 50 employees. Commonly known as “Parity Legislation” around the country, appropriate insurance coverage (Senate Bill 36 Mandatory Coverage Mental Disorders ICD-9) requires insurance coverage for mental health that is equal to physical health and aims to reduce the significant costs to business associated with untreated mental illnesses. Senator Keller (D-District 20) and Representative Stafford (R-District 40) sponsor the bill.

“Treatment for mental health issues is incredibly successful! When appropriately diagnosed and treated, depression has an 80 percent success rate and panic disorder is up to 90 percent successful. Significant advances in the understanding of the brain and more and better medication options, combined with treatment success, leaves no reason for people to fear a mental health diagnosis and seek treatment. Senate Bill 36 will pave the way for many more Coloradans to achieve mental wellness,” states **Jeanne M. Rohner, President and CEO of the Mental Health Association of Colorado.**

“Untreated mental illness has a huge cost on business and tax payers alike. By expanding coverage we know we can reduce such costs and restore many mentally ill people to productive employees and tax payers,” states **Senator Keller.**

Senate Bill 36 will be heard before the Senate State, Veteran and Military Affairs Committee, Monday, February 5 at 1:30pm in Senate Hearing Room SCR 353.

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### **About the Mental Health Association of Colorado**

The Mental Health Association of Colorado, the Colorado affiliate of the National Mental Health Association, is the catalyst and voice for the Colorado mental health movement. Through Education, Advocacy and Outreach, we provide resources to Coloradans affected by the entire spectrum of mental health issues.

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