



National Association of Social Workers - California Chapter

October 4, 2011

To Whom It May Concern:

The National Association of Social Workers, California Chapter has reviewed "Care Delayed, Care Denied: Kaiser Permanente's Failure to Provide Timely and Appropriate Mental Health Services" and we are seriously concerned with the key findings of this report. It appears that there are very serious and clear violations of California law relating to timely access to care and inadequate health care practices at Kaiser that appear to fall short of recommended clinical standards.

Timely and appropriate mental health care is crucial for the well being of mental health consumers. Treatment that is delayed can seriously jeopardize the mental health of a client and can accelerate the progression of a mental health condition. This can have very serious consequences not only for the patient but for the well being and safety of others.

In addition, mental health parity laws appear to have been violated. State and Federal mental health parity laws require health plans to provide equal benefits for mental health care under the same terms and conditions as applied to other medical conditions.

We agree with the report that state and federal authorities should investigate this matter to ensure that mental health clients at Kaiser are receiving timely and appropriate treatment. We also agree that Kaiser should work with its mental health professionals to ensure that appropriate staffing levels are achieved in order to provide quality services.

The National Association of Social Workers, California Chapter represents over 11,500 professional social workers in California who have degrees from accredited social work programs across the country. NASW-CA advocates, on behalf of our members and their clients, for the implementation and improvement of programs and policies designed to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic needs of all people.