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Executive Director

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June 18, 2010

New Jersey Psychological Association  
414 Eagle Rock Avenue—Suite 211  
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Dear Friends:

As a state-wide, consumer-operated service delivery organization, CSP-NJ, heartily endorses your efforts to take action against insurance companies who are making it increasingly difficult for their subscribers to access mental health services. Although the majority of our \$11 million annual budget comes from New Jersey's Division of Mental Health Services, and thereby would classify our services as being delivered as part of the public mental health system, we have great familiarity with the difficulty that individuals face when trying to obtain mental health services using their own insurance plans, whether that be our over 4,500 service recipients or our staff of 140, of whom approximately 60% have their own psychiatric histories. In addition, our bylaws stipulate that at least two thirds of our Board of Directors have the lived experience of mental illnesses, and in fact the current proportion is more like three quarters. In short, we are by all definitions a consumer-run organization, and we know first hand the challenges of obtaining good mental health services and having them paid for.

That is why we are so pleased to support your ***Crisis in Mental Health Insurance*** project with this letter and with permission to list us among your "Supporters" on the [SpeakYourMindNJ](http://SpeakYourMindNJ.com) website. It happens all too frequently that someone we know has difficulty obtaining counseling or psychotherapy on an outpatient basis, despite what appears to be good insurance coverage. Inevitably, when such a person's condition deteriorates, the services they need become more intensive and more expensive, often falling to the public sector to provide. Services in more restrictive settings also interrupt people's lives in a more profound way, removing them from natural community supports, teaching them dependency, and in the most serious cases leading them into full psychiatric hospitalizations, replete with their own exorbitant costs and frequently iatrogenic effects.

For so many reasons then, we wish you the best of success in this endeavor, and pledge to support your effort by raising consciousness whenever we can about the importance of advocating for ease of access to mental health benefits, and minimal interference by third-party payors into the clinical work that providers are so highly motivated and trained to do.

Sincerely,

Nancy Brown  
President, CSP Board of Directors