

The Society for Psychoanalysis and Psychoanalytic Psychology Commends UnitedHealth Group Lawsuit Decision

March 25, 2019

The Society for Psychoanalysis and Psychoanalytic Psychology (SPPP), Division 39 of the American Psychological Association, commends the decision made by U.S. Chief Magistrate Judge Joseph C. Spero on March 5, 2019, which found that United Behavioral Health (UBH) violated its fiduciary responsibilities to its policy holders by setting medical necessity criteria below generally accepted standards of care to save money, and denied patients care once they seemed stable.

For those of us who understand the value of treating people rather than symptoms, Judge Spero's recognition of UBH's "excessive emphasis on addressing acute symptoms and stabilizing crises, while ignoring the effective treatment of members' underlying conditions," speaks directly to what advocates have been fighting for regarding mental health parity for decades.

SPPP President Barry Dauphin, PhD, ABPP noted, "Judge Spero's decision penetrated the black box of the term 'medical necessity' and found it to be highly flawed. Inappropriately restrictive medical necessity criteria have been used by UBH to deny services to mental health patients. In doing so, the court outlined what 'generally accepted standards of care' are. All too often, these standards have been ignored by UBH, and we believe his finding has significant implications for other 3rd party payers."

Founded in 1979, the Society for Psychoanalysis and Psychoanalytic Psychology is the 39th division of APA. With more than 3,000 doctoral level psychologists, graduate students and allied mental health professionals, it is one of the largest associations of psychoanalytic professionals and scholars in the world. Our members represent the full diversity of contemporary psychoanalytic theory, research and clinical practice.

This is a statement of Division 39 (Society of Psychoanalysis and Psychoanalytic Psychology) of the American Psychological Association, and does not represent the position of the American Psychological Association or any of its other Divisions or subunits.