

March 25, 2003

**H 654. MENTAL HEALTH/CHEMICAL DEPENDENCY PARITY. TO REQUIRE PARITY IN HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR MENTAL ILLNESS AND CHEMICAL DEPENDENCY.** Amends GS 58-51-50, 58-65-75, 58-67-70, and 58-50-155 and creates new GS 58-3-220 to require that group health insurers provide coverage for the treatment of chemical dependency and mental illness at the same level and subject to the same limits as benefits are provided for physical illness. Amends GS 58-51-55, 58-65-90, and 58-67-75 definitions of "mental illness" and "chemical dependency." Makes technical corrections and conforming changes. Provides that act prevails to the extent it conflicts with GS 58-50-63. Effective for health benefit plans issued or renewed on or after Jan. 1, 2004.

**Intro. by Alexander, Insko, Hackney, Wainwright.**

Ref. to Insurance	GS 58
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