

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) – Congressman Wally Herger (CA-02) today voiced opposition to [H.R. 1424](#)

arguing that it would increase health insurance premiums, reduce access to mental health benefits, and hurt physician-owned hospitals that provide high-quality health care. Herger supports an alternative proposal, negotiated with the support of both employers and mental health advocates, that would provide genuine mental health parity without harming physician-owned hospitals. Herger’s floor statement follows:

“Mr. Speaker, I'd like to encourage every Member of Congress to ask their constituents one simple question: Are your health insurance premiums high enough? Because this bill will make them higher.

“We all want to improve access to mental health treatment. But the legislation before us could force some employers to drop mental health benefits altogether. Under this bill, plans are actually prohibited from covering treatment for depression – or, potentially, even a program to help someone quit smoking – unless they agree to cover literally everything in the book.

“I'm especially concerned by the ‘offset’ that effectively bans physician investment in hospitals. What concerns me is that this provision could have a devastating impact on access to high quality health care. There are just two hospitals in the city of Redding, California, in my congressional district. One of them nearly shut down a few years ago. It was bought by a company that specializes in turning around failing hospitals. Part of their strategy was to give the physicians who work at the hospital a partial ownership stake. They were successful, and as a result, a vital community hospital is still open in a largely underserved area. This so-called ‘offset’ would subject it to crippling new regulations, and it could doom other struggling hospitals to closure.

“Vote no on this misguided legislation.”