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**Bill Introduced in Congress Brings Meaningful Use Parity for Behavioral Health and Addiction Treatment Providers****Netsmart Supports Key Provision of Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act**

**Overland Park, Kan., June 4, 2015** – [Netsmart](#) applauds provisions of the “Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act,” introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives today by [Rep. Tim Murphy](#) (R-PA).

The bill extends to behavioral health and addiction treatment providers the ability to receive Medicaid and Medicare incentive funds for the Meaningful Use of certified electronic health records (EHRs) to more closely match those available to hospitals and other primary care providers.

The Murphy-sponsored legislation has bipartisan support, and is aimed at addressing the mental health crisis nationwide where 60 million people experience mental illness in a given year. **Co-sponsor of the bill is [Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson](#) (D-TX)**

“Our clients are working tirelessly to integrate their services with the rest of healthcare to improve the health of all Americans, yet these providers are not fully eligible for valuable funding that would help them more effectively address the needs of those battling mental illness and addiction issues,” says Mike Valentine, chief executive officer, Netsmart. “In order to ‘treat the whole person,’ these providers need to be put on a level playing field with hospitals and other primary care providers.”

**The bill expands Medicaid and Medicare Meaningful Use incentive funding eligibility to include mental health treatment facilities, psychiatric hospitals and substance abuse treatment facilities. It also expands the types of providers that are eligible for Medicaid and Medicare Meaningful Use incentives to include clinical psychologists and licensed social workers.** Currently, behavioral health provider organizations can qualify for Meaningful Use incentive funds only through the current definition of Eligible Professionals, which includes physicians and some nurse practitioners that are affiliated with their facilities. The typical behavioral health organization has a limited number of these professionals compared to psychologists and licensed social workers.

“Persons served in the behavioral health space are among the largest utilizers of Medicaid dollars due to the high incidence of co-occurring physical health disorders, which often lead to extensive visits to emergency rooms,” said Kevin Scalia, Netsmart executive vice president. “Sixty-seven percent of that population has co-occurring conditions ranging from diabetes to heart disease. Coordinated care – made possible in part by EHRs – can improve their quality of life and lower healthcare costs.”

Netsmart is a founding member of the [Behavioral Health IT \(BHIT\) Coalition](#), an advocacy group comprised of key organizations including the National Council for Behavioral Health, the National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems and others. The BHIT Coalition is a strong supporter and advocate for passage of legislation in Congress to extend full Meaningful Use incentive



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eligibility to behavioral health providers. For more information about Netsmart's advocacy on behalf of its clients, visit the [Netsmart legislative and policy webpage](#).

### **About Netsmart**

Netsmart is committed to helping health and human services providers deliver effective, outcomes-based care. Netsmart serves more than 20,000 clients across all 50 states, resulting in approximately 450,000 users of its software and technology solutions. Netsmart clients include mental health and addiction services agencies, health homes, psychiatric hospitals, private and group mental health practices, public health departments, social services and child and family services agencies, managed care organizations, and vital records offices.

Netsmart's [CareFabric™](#), a framework of innovative clinical and business solutions and services, supports integrated, coordinated delivery of health services across the spectrum of care.

Netsmart's [HIT Value Model™](#), a vendor-agnostic planning and measurement system, provides a path for health and human services organizations to evaluate where on the healthcare IT spectrum they should focus their efforts, the value associated with that strategic decision and a comparison with peer organizations nationwide.

Netsmart is pleased to support the EveryDay Matters Foundation, which was established for behavioral and public health organizations to learn from each other and share their causes and stories. For more information, visit [www.everydaymatters.com](http://www.everydaymatters.com)

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