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CONTACTS:  
Menendez Press Office 202-224-4744

## **MENENDEZ GAINS COVERAGE FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH IN FINANCE VERSION OF HEALTH REFORM BILL**

*Treatments for autism, other behavioral health conditions,  
included as part of benefits standard in plans that are part of new  
insurance exchange*

**WASHINGTON** – Late last night in the U.S. Senate Finance Committee, Senator Robert Menendez (D-NJ) scored a victory for families affected by behavioral health conditions, including Autism Spectrum Disorders. As part of Finance’s health insurance reform bill, Menendez gained inclusion of his amendment that will add behavioral health treatment to the minimum benefits package that all plans must provide in the new health insurance exchanges.

**“A major goal of real health insurance reform is to ensure that insurance plans won’t deny coverage for necessary and important services – and that certainly includes behavioral health treatment,”** said Menendez. **“With the highest rate of Autism Spectrum Disorders in the nation, the people of New Jersey certainly understand how important it is not only to have access to this type of treatment but to have insurance coverage for it. Families affected by these conditions shouldn’t have to worry about going bankrupt because of it, and we are trying to help ensure that they don’t.”**

The new health insurance exchange that would be created under health insurance reform would be a pool of various insurance plans available to families without employer-sponsored insurance, Medicaid, Medicare or insurance through the Veterans Administration. This amendment ensures that plans in the exchange must cover behavioral health treatments as part of the minimum benefits standard.

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Afshin Mohamadi  
Communications Director  
Sen. Robert Menendez (D-NJ)  
202-224-4744

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