



## **Eating Disorders Coalition Applauds Decision in *Wit v. UnitedHealthcare Insurance Company***

WASHINGTON, D.C. (March 8, 2019) – The Eating Disorders Coalition (EDC) joins our mental health colleagues in aligning with Judge Spero’s recent decision in *Wit v. United Healthcare Insurance Company* as a step forward in ensuring patients and their families receive the mental health and substance use disorder services they need and deserve. Judge Spero found United Behavioral Health (UBH), UnitedHealth Group’s unit managing services for mental illness and substance use disorder in private health plans created policies to discriminate against patients with mental health and substance use disorders. The 11 plaintiffs in the case of *Wit v. United Healthcare Insurance Company* represent over 50,000 patients who were denied care under UBH discriminatory policies. The main plaintiff in the case, Natasha Wit sought coverage for treatment of multiple chronic conditions, including a severe eating disorder and was repeatedly denied treatment by UBH.

Unfortunately, the EDC knows all too well the discrimination that permeates our health care system for individuals with mental illness. The Anna Westin Act provisions within 21<sup>st</sup> Century Cures (P.L. 114-255) focuses on improving clarity of mental health parity. We continue to work with the Department of Labor, Department of Health and Human Services and Department of the Treasury to provide further guidance on parity compliance and enforcement through written comments and stakeholder roundtables. Although Judge Spero’s decision is a step forward in holding insurers accountable for parity non-compliance, this case places a greater spotlight on the need for continued equity in treatment for patients and their families affected by eating disorders and other mental illnesses.

“We respect Judge Spero’s decision and remain hopeful this ruling can serve as a turning point in mental health parity compliance,” said EDC Board President, Chase Bannister, MDIV, MSW, LCSW, CEDS. “We will continue to advocate for equity in mental health treatment as a fundamental right.”

*The Eating Disorders Coalition (EDC) is a Washington, D.C.-based, federal advocacy organization comprised of treatment providers, advocacy organizations, academics, parents of children with eating disorders and people experiencing eating disorders nationwide. Additional resources can also be found at [www.eatingdisorderscoalition.org](http://www.eatingdisorderscoalition.org).###*