

Washington, D.C. - The U.S. House today approved a bill containing funding to support new mental health services in Wake County. The \$300,000 in funding was requested by Congressman David Price (D-NC).

As the News & Observer reported in May, "Since...2003, Wake County has had no general hospital capacity for people in psychiatric distress." The state's Dorothea Dix mental health facility was used by the County for this purpose, and with the impending closure of Dix, Wake County's capacity to provide hospitalization and other mental health care to its citizens will be challenged.

In response, Wake has partnered with Holly Hill Hospital to expand that facility's psychiatric ward to include a total of 44 new beds for short-term, acute mental health patients. The funding secured by Price will help provide the expanded mental health services.

"Wake County is working hard to ensure that its citizens are guaranteed access to mental health care," Price said, "and I'm glad to support their efforts in Congress. When local health resources severely depleted, the first to lose out are the uninsured and the working poor. With this new facility, we will plug a widening gap in mental health coverage for the citizens of Wake County."

The Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill (H.R. 3043) passed the House by a vote of 276-140. The Senate is expected to consider the legislation in September.

Other key provisions of the bill approved by the House today:

Makes college more affordable by increasing the maximum Pell Grant award by \$390.

Helps raise the achievement levels of America's students by providing increased funding for the No Child Left Behind Act by \$2 billion. A common criticism of the education program is that it

labels schools 'failing' without providing critical resources to address shortcomings.

Invests in initiatives that will provide access to health care for more than 2 million uninsured Americans, including an increase of \$66.8 million to address mental illness and substance abuse disorders through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

Invests in life-saving medical research by providing a \$750 million increase for the National Institutes of Health, which supports much of the research in the Research Triangle.

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