

# Mental Health Liaison Group

November 29, 2016

The Honorable Paul Ryan  
Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
H-232, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
H-204, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Majority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
H-107, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Steny Hoyer  
Minority Whip  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1705 Longworth H.O.B.  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Ryan, Minority Leader Pelosi, Majority Leader McCarthy, and Minority Whip Hoyer:

We, the undersigned organizations, write today in strong support of mental health reform provisions contained in the bicameral and bipartisan end-of-year healthcare package currently being advanced, and we urge the House to pass these provisions as soon as possible.

As you know, we have a mental health crisis in this country. Over 68 million Americans have experienced a mental health or substance use disorder in the past year, which is more than 20 percent of the total population of the United States. Lifetime rates are much higher with some estimates approaching 50 percent. More striking, in 2014, nearly 43,000 Americans died by suicide. Many individuals with mental health or substance use conditions are unable to access or receive the appropriate services and supports for these disorders, and they remain constantly challenged by mental health service delivery systems that are largely fragmented and uncoordinated across the country.

Thanks in large part to the tireless efforts of Representative Tim Murphy (R-PA), Representative Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX), and others, Congress has prioritized mental health reform efforts over the past three years. We are pleased that the underlying healthcare package incorporates H.R. 2646, the Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act, which passed the House nearly unanimously in July. These important bipartisan provisions strengthen federal coordination of mental health resources, increase reporting on mental health parity, advance integrated service delivery, support the mental health workforce, increase early access to mental health services, promote suicide prevention, and enact meaningful reforms to criminal justice systems.

The need for reform is urgent, and you have the opportunity to act now to improve the lives of tens of millions of Americans, their families, and our communities.

National organizations representing consumers, family members, advocates, professionals and providers  
c/o Laurel Stine, J.D., American Psychological Association at [lstine@apa.org](mailto:lstine@apa.org)  
and Debbie Plotnick, MSS, MLSP, Mental Health America at [dplotnick@mentalhealthamerica.net](mailto:dplotnick@mentalhealthamerica.net)

We urge you to enact mental health reform legislation this year.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Pediatrics  
American Art Therapy Association  
American Association for Geriatric Psychiatry  
American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy  
American Dance Therapy Association  
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention  
American Group Psychotherapy Association  
American Nurses Association  
American Occupational Therapy Association  
American Psychiatric Association  
American Psychological Association  
Anxiety and Depression Association of America  
Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare  
Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness  
Center for Clinical Social Work  
The Clinical Social Work Association  
Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance  
Eating Disorders Coalition  
Emergency Nurses Association  
The Jewish Federations of North America  
Mental Health America  
National Alliance on Mental Illness  
National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health  
National Association for Children's Behavioral Health  
National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors  
National Council for Behavioral Health  
National Health Care for the Homeless Council\*  
National League for Nursing  
The National Multiple Sclerosis Society\*  
The National Register of Health Service Psychologists  
No Health without Mental Health  
Parity Implementation Coalition\*\*  
Sandy Hook Promise  
Schizophrenia and Related Disorders Alliance of America  
School Social Work Association of America  
Tourette Association of America  
The Trevor Project  
Trinity Health, Livonia MI\*

\*Affiliate Member

\*\*not MHLG member