## Mental Health Liaison Group

February 19, 2015

The Honorable Michael Enzi U.S. Senate Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bernard Sanders U.S. Senate Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Orrin Hatch U.S. Senate Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Ron Wyden U.S. Senate Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Price U.S. House of Representatives Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chris Van Hollen U.S. House of Representatives Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Paul Ryan U.S. House of Representatives Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Sandy Levin U.S. House of Representatives Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairmen and Ranking Members:

The undersigned national organizations support inclusion in your FY2016 Budget proposal eliminating the discrimination against mental illnesses that continues to exist in the Medicare program as Medicare beneficiaries are still limited to 190-days of inpatient psychiatric hospital care during their lifetime. There is no such lifetime limit for any other Medicare specialty inpatient hospital service.

Through passage of *Affordable Care Act of 2010* and the *Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008*, coverage for mental health and addictive disorders is now required to be on par with other medical disorders. We must now finally give Medicare beneficiaries the full parity that other individuals now have under the law.

The Mental Health Liaison Group supports the provision in the President's FY2016 Budget that eliminates the Medicare 190-day lifetime limit for psychiatric hospital care. This provision would improve access to inpatient psychiatric care by allowing Medicare patients' coverage in psychiatric hospitals. The elimination of the 190-day limit will equalize Medicare mental health coverage with private health insurance coverage, offer beneficiaries the choice of inpatient psychiatric care providers, increase access for the most seriously ill, improve continuity of care and create a more cost-effective Medicare program.

We look forward to working with you to eliminate discrimination against Medicare beneficiaries with mental health and substance use disorders. We invite you to contact our MHLG Steering Committee member, Nancy Trenti at 202/393-6700 with comments or with questions.

Alliance for Strong Families and Communities

American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy

American Association on Health and Disability\*

American Dance Therapy Association

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

American Group Psychotherapy Association

American Mental Health Counselors Association

American Nurses Association

American Association of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

American Group Psychotherapy Association

American Psychiatric Association

American Psychiatric Nurses Association

American Psychoanalytic Association

American Psychological Association

American Orthopsychiatric Association

Anxiety and Depression Association of America

Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare

Clinical Social Work Association

Clinical Social Work Guild

Confederation of Independent Psychoanalytic Societies

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance

Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy & Action

Families USA

Mental Health America

National Alliance on Mental Illness

National Association for Children's Behavioral Health

National Association for Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Counselors

National Association of Anorexia and Associated Disorders, ANAD

National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems

National Association of Social Workers

National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors, (NASMHPD)

National Council for Behavioral Health

National Disability Rights Network

National League for Nursing

National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health

No Health without Mental Health

Schizophrenia and Related Disorders Alliance of America

NJ Society for Clinical Social Work, CSW Guild 49 OPEIU-AFL-CIO\*\*

The Jewish Federations of North America

The National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health

\* MHLG Observer

\*\* not a MHLG member