## Mental Health Liaison Group

November 14, 2016

The Honorable Mitch McConnell Senate Majority Leader 317 Russell Senate Office Building Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Harry Reid Senate Minority Leader 522 Hart Senate Office Building Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leader McConnell and Minority Leader Reid:

On behalf of the undersigned national organizations, we are writing to strongly urge you to bring up and swiftly pass comprehensive mental health reform legislation this year.

We applaud the work of the Senate HELP Committee, which unanimously approved S. 2680, the Mental Health Reform Act, in April. The House has also shown their strong, bipartisan support for mental health by passing H.R 2646, the Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act by a vote of 422-2 in July.

These bills have been developed with the broad support of the mental health advocacy community. It is past time that we move these solutions forward and into law. We cannot afford to wait another year or another Congress to take action.

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, but half did not get any mental health care in the past year. America's suicide rate is the highest it's been in 30 years, and the rates of homelessness, incarceration, and disability as a result of untreated and undiagnosed mental and behavioral health conditions continue to rise.

S. 2680 and H.R. 2646 will improve the coordination of federal mental health resources, combat suicide, increase early access to mental health services, address our growing workforce shortage, advance integrated health care delivery, and strengthen mental health parity. And we need your leadership to pass and resource these critical policies by this year's end.

Thank you for your consideration. We are eager to stand with you to pass the solutions we need this year and improve the lives of millions of Americans impacted by mental and behavioral health conditions.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Pediatrics American Art Therapy Association American Association for Geriatric Psychiatry American Association of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry 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 Occupational Therapy Association American Orthopsychiatric Association American Psychiatric Association American Psychological Association Anxiety and Depression Association of America Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness **Clinical Social Work Association** Clinical Social Work Guild 49 Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance Eating Disorders Coalition **Emergency Nurses Association** The Jewish Federations of North America Lakeshore Foundation \*\* Mental Health America National Alliance to End Homelessness National Alliance on Mental Illness National Association for Children's Behavioral Health National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems National Association of Social Workers National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors National Health Care for the Homeless Council \* National League for Nursing The National MS Society \* The National Register of Health Service Psychologists No Health without Mental Health Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association and Foundation Sandy Hook Promise School Social Work Association of America Tourette Association of America The Trevor Project Trinity Health \*

> \*Affiliate Member \*\*not MHLG member