

June 24, 2015

The Honorable Scott Peters
U.S. House of Representatives
1122 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Peters:

The undersigned organizations representing consumers, family members, advocates, providers, and professionals are pleased to express support for your House Resolution designating the first full week in May as "National Mental Health No Stigma Week." As organizations that advocate for a variety of mental health and addiction issues, we applaud your leadership in introducing this resolution that calls attention to the unfortunate stigma that is often cast upon people who have, or know someone who has, a mental illness.

Approximately one in four adults experience mental illness in a given year (National Institute of Mental Health), yet misconception and misinformation have left many people with mental illness afraid to talk about their experiences or to seek help. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, approximately 13 percent of children ages 8 to 15 had a diagnosable mental disorder within the previous year. By reducing the stigma, we also reduce the barriers to health-seeking behavior and send the message that mental illness is like any other illness.

Your commitment to eliminating the stigma that impedes progress in the areas of mental health and wellness are commendable, and we thank you for undertaking such a goal. We welcome the opportunity to work with you to help enact this important House Resolution.

Sincerely,

American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
American Counseling Association
American Group Psychotherapy Association
American Occupational Therapy Association
American Orthopsychiatric Association
American Psychological Association
Anxiety and Depression Association of America
Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare
Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness/Stamp Out Stigma Initiative
Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance
National Alliance on Mental Illness
National Association of County Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability Directors
National Association of Social Workers
National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors
National Coalition for Mental Health Recovery
National Disability Rights Network
Schizophrenia and Related Disorders Alliance of America
Treatment Communities of America