

February 23, 2018

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

The Honorable Chuck Schumer, Minority Leader
United States Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Paul Ryan, Speaker of the House
US House of Representatives
1233 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Minority Leader
US House of Representatives
235 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Schumer, Speaker of the House Ryan and Minority Leader Pelosi:

On behalf of the Mental Health Liaison Group, the undersigned organizations are writing today to applaud the Congress's announcement and passage of a recent budget deal. The Mental Health Liaison Group is a coalition of national organizations representing mental health and substance use consumers, providers, family members, and other concerned citizens. Together, on behalf of the millions of Americans living with mental health and substance use disorders, their families and communities, we advocate for public policies and funding to improve access to high-quality care.

Far too many Americans living with a mental health or substance use disorder are unable to access needed treatment. For example, among teens with a major depressive episode in the last year, just 38 percent received treatment. Only 2.5 million of the 22.7 million Americans with a drug or alcohol use disorder received treatment for their condition in 2013 – that's a mere 11 percent.¹

After months of negotiation, Congress came together to put our country, and the needs of its citizens, first. The budget deal raises the discretionary budget caps on both defense and non-defense programming – a policy the MHLG has long supported and advocated on with your offices and those of your colleagues. This policy change will allow for meaningful and life-saving government programs to continue and help millions of Americans living with mental illnesses and addictions to access the services they need. The deal includes authorization of billions of dollars in mental health and addiction treatment spending, a four-year extension of the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), and renewals of community health center funding and Medicare extenders.

Of great importance to the undersigned organizations, this agreement authorizes an additional \$6 billion in spending for mental health and addiction treatment programs over the next two years. By expanding our nation's investment in these important programs, Congress can help create healthier communities and ensure that all Americans can access the treatment they need, when they need it.

Thank you for your continued leadership and dedication to the mental health and addictions treatment community. The Mental Health Liaison Group eagerly awaits details on how the money is to be spent and looks forward to Congress' continued support of people with mental illness and addiction in the future.

Sincerely,

2020 Mom

American Academy of Pediatrics
American Association of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry
American Association for Geriatric Psychiatry
American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy
American Dance Therapy Association
American Mental Health Counselors Association
American Nurses Association
American Psychiatric Association
American Psychological Association
American Art Therapy Association
American Occupational Therapy Association
Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare
Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness
Center for Clinical Social Work
Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
Clinical Social Work Association
College of Psychiatric and Neurologic Pharmacists
Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance
Eating Disorders Coalition
Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice
International Certification & Reciprocity Consortium
The Jewish Federations of North America
Mental Health America
National Alliance on Mental Illness
National Association of County Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability Directors
National Association of Counties
National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors
National Association for Rural Mental Health
National Association of Social Workers
National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors (NASADAD)
National Council for Behavioral Health
National Disability Rights Network
National Health Care for the Homeless Council
National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health
National League for Nursing
Residential Eating Disorders Consortium
School Social Work Association of America

¹ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality. (September 4, 2014). The NSDUH Report: Substance Use and Mental Health Estimates from the 2013 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Overview of Findings. Rockville, MD. Accessed online at <http://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/NSDUH14-0904/NSDUH14-0904.pdf>