

Mental Health Liaison Group

July 16, 2008

The Honorable Gordon Smith
404 Russell Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Christopher Dodd
448 Russell Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Smith and Dodd:

The undersigned national organizations in the Mental Health Liaison Group are pleased to write in support of The Healthy Transitions Act, S. 3195.

According to the Government Accountability Office, an estimated 2.4 million youth within transition ages (18 to 26) have a serious mental health disorder. Although this population is not unique in experiencing difficulties as they transition to adulthood, they are more likely than their peers to experience poor outcomes, including areas of employment and education. Left without access to necessary services and supports, successful transitions to adulthood cannot be realized. The Healthy Transitions Act would help young adults with a serious mental health disorder obtain vital resources, knowledge and skills necessary for adulthood.

The Healthy Transitions Act would establish planning and implementation grants to States to assist in the development of a coordinated service delivery system to maximize continuity of care and access to services. Young adults who are transitioning to the adult mental health system will be able to benefit from the infrastructure that would be developed to access such services as peer support programs, independent living and life support skills as well as employment, housing and education supports. Additionally, S. 3195 would establish a committee of federal partners to help coordinate the myriad of federal programs that assist young adults with a mental disorder and provide technical assistance to States as they implement their plans.

We applaud your ongoing leadership in the mental health arena, and we look forward to working with you and your colleagues to enact the Healthy Transitions Act.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Children and Families
American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
American Association for Geriatric Psychiatry
American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy
American Association of Pastoral Counselors
American Counseling Association
American Group Psychotherapy Association
American Mental Health Counselors Association

National organizations representing consumers, family members, advocates, professionals and providers
c/o Laurel Stine, Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law, 1101 15th Street, NW, #1212, Washington, DC 20005

American Occupational Therapy Association
American Psychiatric Association
American Psychoanalytic Association
American Psychological Association
Anxiety Disorders Association of America
Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare
Association for the Advancement of Psychology
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
Child Welfare League of America
Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
Clinical Social Work Association
Clinical Social Work Guild
Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance
Emergency Nurses Association
Mental Health America
National Alliance on Mental Illness
National Alliance to End Homelessness
National Association for Children's Behavioral Health
National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders
National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities
National Association of County Behavioral Health and Developmental
Disability Directors
National Association of Mental Health Planning and Advisory Councils
National Association of School Psychologists
National Association of Social Workers
National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors
National Coalition of Mental Health Consumer/Survivor Organizations
National Coalition of Mental Health Professionals and Consumers, Inc.
National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare
National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health
Suicide Prevention Action Network USA
United Jewish Communities
U.S. Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association
Witness Justice