

Mental Health Liaison Group

October 15, 2001

The Honorable Edward M. Kennedy
Chairman
Senate Committee on Health,
Education, Labor and Pensions
SH-527 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Kennedy:

The undersigned organizations are writing to express our support for the "Post Terrorism Mental Health Improvement Act," draft legislation to improve our country's disaster response capability for the mental health needs of our citizens.

The hearing on September 26th before your committee focused the nation's attention on the fact that people all across the country, especially children, have been deeply affected by the tragic events of September 11th. Children particularly may be vulnerable to serious mental health problems as a result of experiencing psychological trauma. Our mental health system presently is not equipped to meet the widespread demand for mental health services which has resulted from such a large-scale disaster. This legislation is an important first step in trying to meet present demands and to plan better for the future.

As we all well know, effective response must embody outreach, early intervention and treatment if we are to help prevent our citizens from developing chronic mental health problems as a result of experiencing severe psychological trauma. This legislation addresses aspects of all three components of an effective response for both children and adults.

Thank you for your leadership. We look forward to working with you on this, on appropriations and on other similar initiatives.

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 Association of Private Practice Psychiatrists
American Counseling Association
American Group Psychotherapy Association
American Mental Health Counselors Association
American Occupational Therapy Association
American Orthopsychiatric Association

National organizations representing consumers, family members, advocates, professionals and providers
c/o Peter Newbould, American Psychological Association, 750 First Street, NE, Washington, DC 20002

American Psychiatric Association
American Psychiatric Nurses Association
American Psychoanalytic Association
American Psychological Association
Anxiety Disorders Association of America
Association for the Advancement of Psychology
Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
Child Welfare League of America
Clinical Social Work Federation
Corporation for the Advancement of Psychiatry
Federation of Behavioral, Psychological & Cognitive Sciences
MentalHealth AMERICA, Inc.
National Association for Rural Mental Health
National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders -- ANAD
National Association of Counties
National Association of County Behavioral Health Directors
National Association of School Psychologists
National Association of Social Workers
National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare
National Mental Health Association
National Mental Health Awareness Campaign
Tourette Syndrome Association