Mental Health Liaison Group

November 14, 2000

The Honorable Henry Bonilla
United States House of Representatives
1427 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-4323

Dear Representative Bonilla:

The undersigned members of the Mental Health Liaison Group (MHLG) - a coalition dedicated to improving access to and the quality of mental health care in the United States - wish to thank you for your leadership in supporting significant increases negotiated in the FY 2001 Labor, Health and Human Services (HHS) and Education Appropriations bill for mental and addictive disorder research and services.

However, the MHLG is very concerned about the unresolved status of FY 2001 funding for mental health initiatives. Therefore, as Congress reconvenes for the post-election session, we urge you to quickly pass a FY 2001 Labor- HHS Appropriations bill that at a minimum meets the funding levels agreed to during the pre-election negotiations.

The agreed-upon funding levels will provide the Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS) within the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) with much needed resources for mental health treatment and services to address the 19 percent of the adult U.S. population with a mental disorder (in 1 year), and the estimated 21 percent of children and adolescents age 9-17 with a mental health disorder. Additionally, this funding will increase the level of services available for nearly one-third of homeless Americans who are mentally ill, increase the availability of youth anti-violence initiatives and suicide prevention efforts.

Equally important are the funding levels for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to continue its commitment to mental and addictive disorder research, and advance new clinical trials on severe mental illnesses such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, major depression, and suicide. Therefore, we urge you to continue to support the higher funding levels for the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) and the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA).

Once again, we thank you for your ongoing support for federal initiatives that seek to improve the lives of children, adults and families struggling with mental illness.

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 Counseling Association
American Family Foundation
American Group Psychotherapy Association
American Mental Health Counselors
American Occupational Therapy Association
American Psychiatric Association
American Psychiatric Nurses Association
American Psychological Association
American Society of Clinical Psychopharmacology
Anxiety Disorder Association
Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare
Association for the Advancement of Psychology
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
Children and Adults with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
Employee Assistance Professionals Association
Federation of Behavioral, Psychological and Cognitive Sciences
Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health
International Association of Psychosocial Rehabilitation Services
National Alliance for the Mentally Ill
National Association for Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders
National Association of County Behavioral Health Directors
National Association of Protection and Advocacy Systems
National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems
National Association of Psychiatric Treatment Centers for Children
National Association of School Psychologists
National Association of Social Workers
National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors
National Coalition for the Homeless
National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare
National Foundation for Depressive Illness, Inc.
National Mental Health Association
National Tourette Syndrome Association