

Mental Health Liaison Group

July 27, 2000

The Honorable Ted Strickland
336 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Dr. Strickland:

The organizations listed below, on behalf of the Mental Health Liaison Group, are writing in support of the Mental Health Early Intervention, Treatment and Prevention Act of 2000. We commend you for introducing this legislation which addresses so many pressing issues in mental health policy.

The legislation includes much needed provisions to fight the stigma of mental illness and to improve awareness among teachers, emergency services personnel and law enforcement officials regarding mental disorders. As the Surgeon General's report found, only about half of those who have a mental illness receive mental health treatment, and far too frequently lack of treatment leads to suicide. The bill would also improve access to mental health care by improving the training of primary care physicians and the liaison between primary care and mental health practitioners.

We also applaud the much needed expansion of resources for services of proven effectiveness for adults and children who have the most serious mental and emotional disorders and who must rely on the public mental health and child welfare systems for care. We are pleased that the bill focuses particularly on integrated treatment for mental illness and addiction and on the needs of individuals who come in contact with the criminal justice system. The arrest and incarceration of adults and children with mental disorders is one of the cruelest outcomes of our inadequate service systems. Finally, we note that the bill authorizes a new commission to consider various important aspects of mental health policy.

This far-reaching legislation covers many aspects of mental health policy. The groups listed below endorse the bill and urge its consideration by the Commerce Committee. However, not all of our groups support every provision as currently drafted, and these organizations look forward to continuing to work with you and your staff on the specifics of the bill.

Once again, we commend you for your ongoing leadership on mental health policy and for introducing this comprehensive approach which follows up on many of the recommendations of the Surgeon General. We look forward to working with you on these extremely important issues.

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 Board of Examiners in Clinical Social Work
American Counseling Association
American Family Foundation
American Group Psychotherapy Association
American Hospital Association
American Mental Health Counselors Association
American Occupational Therapy Association
American Orthopsychiatric Association
American Psychiatric 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
Employee Assistance Professionals Association
Federation of Behavioral, Psychological & Cognitive Sciences
Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health
International Association of Psychosocial Rehabilitation Services
MentalHealth AMERICA, Inc.
National Alliance for the Mentally Ill
National Association for Rural Mental Health
National Association of 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 School Psychologists
National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors
National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare
National Depressive and Manic-Depressive Association
National Mental Health Association
Tourette Syndrome Association