

Mental Health Liaison Group

September 27, 2002

The Honorable Bill Young
Chairman, House Appropriations Committee
H-218 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Young:

As you proceed with the FY 2003 Labor, Health and Human Services Appropriations bill, the undersigned members of the Mental Health Liaison Group (MHLG), a coalition representing the broad, diverse mental health community that serves men, women and children, and their families, **urge you to provide additional funding for critical mental health programs building on the funding levels secured in July's Senate mark up of its bill.**

The mental health system in the United States is in "crisis, unable to provide even the most basic services and supports to people with psychiatric disabilities," according to a federal report released September 16, 2002. "The Well Being of Our Nation: An Inter-Generational Vision of Effective Mental Health Services and Supports" was compiled by the National Council on Disability, a 15-member independent federal panel. The panel concludes that "**visionary leadership, adequate funding and expansion of proven models**" are necessary to begin rehabilitating the system.

Although the Senate took an important step in restoring proposed cuts for Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) programs, the 1.5 % increase in the Senate mark up for the Center for Mental Health Services is neither adequate nor does it provide sufficient resources to begin rehabilitating the system. Furthermore, the Senate Committee's appropriation for the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) was \$8 million less than the President's recommendation. We urge the House to follow the President's request.

We urge you to make mental health funding a priority. More than ever, we need your continued support and commitment to improve the availability, accessibility, and quality of services for individuals with mental illness through increased federal investment in federal mental health programs. **Please work to maintain the Senate's effort to restore cuts in SAMHSA funding and to increase funding for NIMH, but also to increase substantially federal support for community-based mental health early intervention, prevention and treatment services.**

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Children and Families
American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
American Association of Children's Residential Centers
American Association for Geriatric Psychiatry (AAGP)
American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy

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American Association for Psychosocial Rehabilitation
American Association of Pastoral Counselors (AAPC)
American Mental Health Counselors Association
American Psychiatric Association
American Psychological Association
Association for the Advancement of Psychology
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
Children & Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (CHADD)
Child Welfare League of America
Clinical Social Work Federation
Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (formerly National Depressive and Manic-Depressive Association)
Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health
International Assoc. of Psychosocial Rehabilitation Services (IAPSRs)
National Alliance for the Mentally Ill
National Association of County Behavioral Health Directors
National Association of Protection and Advocacy Systems (NAPAS)
National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems
National Association of School Psychologists
National Association of Social Workers
National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare
National Mental Health Association
National Network for Youth
Suicide Prevention Action Network (SPAN)

cc: The Honorable David Obey, Ranking Member, House Appropriations Committee
The Honorable Ralph Regula, Chairman, House Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations Subcommittee