

# Mental Health Liaison Group

June 22, 2017

The Honorable Richard Durbin  
711 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rob Portman  
448 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Sherrod Brown  
713 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito  
172 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Susan Collins  
413 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Angus King  
133 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Cory Booker  
359 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Joe Manchin  
306 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators:

The undersigned national mental health and substance use disorder organizations in the Mental Health Liaison Group are writing today to thank you for your leadership in authoring legislation to modify existing Medicaid payment prohibitions to allow payments for certain residential treatment facilities to treat individuals with substance use disorders. Your bill – the Medicaid Coverage for Addiction Recovery Expansion (CARE) Act - would improve access to needed substance use treatment services for millions of Americans across the country.

According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 22 million Americans aged 12 or older have experienced a substance use or abuse disorder. Fatal drug overdoses are a leading cause of accidental death in our country. Approximately 38,000 people die each year from drug overdose. That's more than 100 per day, with 40 deaths per day from opioid drugs alone. Opioid and heroin addiction is destroying lives, disrupting families and destabilizing communities. Your legislation would expand access and infuse needed funding to better treat the underserved and at-risk patient population.

The payment prohibition, known as the "Institutes for Mental Disease (IMD) Exclusion", was created in the early days of the Medicaid program – an era when today's robust community-based addiction treatment system did not exist – to ensure that states retained financial responsibility for mental hospitals.

Today, the exclusion prevents Medicaid from providing federal matching funds for services provided in residential substance use settings with more than 16 beds, hindering patients' access to care. Your bill would increase the bed limit in these settings from 16 to include the first 40 beds in any facility, greatly expanding the number of facilities capable of servicing this population. By alleviating this prohibition and allowing facilities to offer treatment services for up to 60 consecutive days, your bill implements vitally important components to a comprehensive strategy addressing the nation's opioid epidemic.

Thank you for your leadership and continued dedication to expanding access to lifesaving treatment for millions of Americans living with substance use and abuse disorders. The Mental Health Liaison Group pledges to fight side-by-side with you to ensure the passage of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

American Art Therapy Association  
American Association for Geriatric Psychiatry  
American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy  
American Association for Psychoanalysis in Clinical Social Work  
American Dance Therapy Association  
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention  
American Group Psychotherapy Association  
American Mental Health Counselors Association  
American Psychological Association  
American Society of Addiction Medicine  
Anxiety and Depression Association of America  
Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare  
Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness  
Clinical Social Work Association  
Confederation of Independent Psychoanalytic Societies  
Eating Disorders Coalition  
Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice  
Illinois Association of Behavioral Health  
International Certification & Reciprocity Consortium  
The Jewish Federations of North America  
National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health  
National Alliance on Mental Illness

National Association for Children's Behavioral Health  
National Association of County Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability Directors  
National Association of Counties  
National Association for Rural Mental Health  
National Association of Social Workers  
National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors  
National Coalition for Maternal Mental Health  
National Council for Behavioral Health  
NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals  
National Health Care for the Homeless Council  
National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health  
National Register of Health Service Psychologists  
NHMH - No Health without Mental Health  
School Social Work Association of America  
Treatment Communities of America  
Trevor Project  
Young Invincibles  
2020 Mom