

February 23, 2018

The Honorable Mitch McConnell, Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
317 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer, Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
322 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Paul Ryan, Speaker of the House  
US House of Representatives  
1233 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Minority Leader  
US House of Representatives  
235 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Schumer, Speaker of the House Ryan and Minority Leader Pelosi:

On behalf of the Mental Health Liaison Group, the undersigned organizations are writing today to applaud the Congress's announcement and passage of a recent budget deal. The Mental Health Liaison Group is a coalition of national organizations representing mental health and substance use consumers, providers, family members, and other concerned citizens. Together, on behalf of the millions of Americans living with mental health and substance use disorders, their families and communities, we advocate for public policies and funding to improve access to high-quality care.

Far too many Americans living with a mental health or substance use disorder are unable to access needed treatment. For example, among teens with a major depressive episode in the last year, just 38 percent received treatment. Only 2.5 million of the 22.7 million Americans with a drug or alcohol use disorder received treatment for their condition in 2013 – that's a mere 11 percent.<sup>1</sup>

After months of negotiation, Congress came together to put our country, and the needs of its citizens, first. The budget deal raises the discretionary budget caps on both defense and non-defense programming – a policy the MHLG has long supported and advocated on with your offices and those of your colleagues. This policy change will allow for meaningful and life-saving government programs to continue and help millions of Americans living with mental illnesses and addictions to access the services they need. The deal includes authorization of billions of dollars in mental health and addiction treatment spending, a four-year extension of the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), and renewals of community health center funding and Medicare extenders.

Of great importance to the undersigned organizations, this agreement authorizes an additional \$6 billion in spending for mental health and addiction treatment programs over the next two years. By expanding our nation's investment in these important programs, Congress can help create healthier communities and ensure that all Americans can access the treatment they need, when they need it.

Thank you for your continued leadership and dedication to the mental health and addictions treatment community. The Mental Health Liaison Group eagerly awaits details on how the money is to be spent and looks forward to Congress' continued support of people with mental illness and addiction in the future.

Sincerely,

*2020 Mom*

*American Academy of Pediatrics*  
*American Association of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*  
*American Association for Geriatric Psychiatry*  
*American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy*  
*American Dance Therapy Association*  
*American Mental Health Counselors Association*  
*American Nurses Association*  
*American Psychiatric Association*  
*American Psychological Association*  
*American Art Therapy Association*  
*American Occupational Therapy Association*  
*Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare*  
*Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness*  
*Center for Clinical Social Work*  
*Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder*  
*Clinical Social Work Association*  
*College of Psychiatric and Neurologic Pharmacists*  
*Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance*  
*Eating Disorders Coalition*  
*Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice*  
*International Certification & Reciprocity Consortium*  
*The Jewish Federations of North America*  
*Mental Health America*  
*National Alliance on Mental Illness*  
*National Association of County Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability Directors*  
*National Association of Counties*  
*National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors*  
*National Association for Rural Mental Health*  
*National Association of Social Workers*  
*National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors (NASADAD)*  
*National Council for Behavioral Health*  
*National Disability Rights Network*  
*National Health Care for the Homeless Council*  
*National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health*  
*National League for Nursing*  
*Residential Eating Disorders Consortium*  
*School Social Work Association of America*

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<sup>1</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality. (September 4, 2014). The NSDUH Report: Substance Use and Mental Health Estimates from the 2013 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Overview of Findings. Rockville, MD. Accessed online at <http://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/NSDUH14-0904/NSDUH14-0904.pdf>