

Wednesday, March 24, 2021

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Majority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Ron Wyden  
Chairman  
Finance Committee  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Frank Pallone  
Chairman  
Energy & Commerce Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Chairman  
Health, Education, Labor & Pensions Committee  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Neal  
Chairman  
Ways & Means Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader Schumer, and Chairmen Wyden, Murray, Pallone and Neal:

On behalf of national organizations representing consumers, family members, mental health and addiction professionals, advocates, payers and other stakeholders, we applaud your leadership in passing the American Rescue Plan Act, a landmark investment in our nation's health and well-being with dramatically increased federal resources to fight the COVID-19 pandemic and reopen the nation. We thank you in particular for the substantial new resources you provided to bolster our country's capacity to serve and support the surging numbers of Americans with mental health and substance use needs, including in underserved areas and among at-risk populations.

The pandemic has strained the nation's behavioral health capacity at a time when we have seen dramatic increases in anxiety, depression, overdose deaths, and suicidal ideation -- including in children, adolescents, and young adults. The American Rescue Plan Act reflects Congress' recognition that this growing mental health and substance use crisis will not be simply and quickly resolved with a vaccine.

The American Rescue Plan Act addresses the current crisis by targeting new federal resources for community mental health and substance use treatment services, pediatric mental health access, suicide prevention, behavioral health workforce education and training, as well as mental health and suicide prevention programs for first responders and other healthcare professionals who have served on the frontlines in the fight against the pandemic. It also incentivizes states to implement multi-disciplinary behavioral health mobile crisis teams who can respond when someone is experiencing a mental health or substance use crisis, and dedicates new resources for schools to provide mental health services and supports to help students get back on track. And, importantly, it provides additional temporary federal resources to supplement states' efforts to help low-income

older adults and people with disabilities live independently in their communities through Medicaid Home- and Community-Based Services.

Beyond the significant new investment to expand the nation's behavioral health capacity specifically, the American Rescue Plan Act tackles the essential economic, employment, food and housing security, and childcare challenges millions of Americans have experienced as the pandemic spread. Significantly, the American Rescue Plan includes measures to make health insurance coverage available for more Americans, from expanding full Medicaid coverage for COVID-19 diagnostic testing and treatment, increasing health plan subsidies available through the Affordable Care Act, providing new incentives for Medicaid expansion, and extending Medicaid coverage for postpartum women – all important steps to expanding access to health and mental health and substance use treatment for more Americans.

Sincerely,

American Art Therapy Association  
American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy  
American Association of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry  
American Association of Nurse Anesthetists  
American Association for Psychoanalysis in Clinical Social Work.  
American Association of Suicidology  
American Association on Health and Disability  
American Counseling Association  
American Dance Therapy Association  
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention  
American Group Psychotherapy Association  
American Mental Health Counselors Association  
American Psychiatric Association  
American Psychiatric Nurses Association  
American Psychological Association  
Anxiety and Depression Association of America  
Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare  
Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies  
Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness  
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law  
Centerstone  
Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (CHADD)  
Clinical Social Work Association  
College of Psychiatric and Neurologic Pharmacists (CPNP)  
Confederation of Independent Psychoanalytic Societies  
Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance

Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy & Action  
Education Development Center  
Girls Inc.  
Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice  
International Certification & Reciprocity Consortium  
International OCD Foundation  
The Jewish Federations of North America  
Maternal Mental Health Leadership Alliance  
Mental Health America  
NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals  
NACBHDD and NARMH  
National Alliance on Mental Illness  
National Association for Behavioral Healthcare  
National Association for Children's Behavioral Health  
National Association for Rural Mental Health  
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners  
National Association of School Psychologists  
National Association of Social Workers  
National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors  
National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors  
National Center of Excellence for Eating Disorders  
National Health Care for the Homeless Council  
National Register of Health Service Psychologists  
Psychotherapy Action Network Advocacy  
REDC Consortium  
SMART Recovery  
The Jed Foundation (JED)  
The Kennedy Forum  
The National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health  
The National Association of Counties  
The Trevor Project  
Treatment Communities of America  
Vibrant Emotional Health  
Well Being Trust