

November 22, 2021

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair, Senate Labor-HHS-Education
Appropriations Subcommittee
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chair, House Appropriations Committee
Chair, House Labor-HHS-Education
Appropriations Subcommittee
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Ranking Member, Senate Labor-HHS-Education
Appropriations Subcommittee
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member, House Appropriations
Committee
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole
Ranking Member, House Labor-HHS-Education
Appropriations Subcommittee
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Support 988 crisis care continuum in the Conference Report for the FY2022 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill

Dear Senators and Representatives:

We are a coalition of national organizations representing people with behavioral health conditions, family members, mental health and substance use disorder treatment providers, advocates, and other stakeholders focused on working together to advance federal support for 988 crisis services. We thank you for the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies (Labor-HHS) Subcommittee's critical investments, both ongoing and new, for mental health programs. We write today to urge you and your colleagues to pass these investments into law as soon as possible, foregoing any short-term or long-term continuing resolutions that would hinder the availability of and access to high-quality, lifesaving care and treatment.

We believe that our nation's ability to respond to behavioral health crises in the same way we respond to other medical emergencies – with prompt, effective, and culturally competent care – is essential to our collective well-being. With the new three-digit crisis number becoming universally available in July 2022, it is essential to act quickly to fund and implement important components of the overall 988 system: 24/7 call centers staffed by mental health professionals, mobile response teams, and crisis stabilization services that connect people to follow-up care.

We appreciate your recognition that while 988 is a simple, nationwide, three-digit number, there is nothing simple about implementing the crisis response services that must accompany this number. We need all stakeholders – federal, state, and local – working together urgently and cooperatively to ensure those services reach across the country by next July. We are hopeful that through the Labor-HHS

Subcommittee’s strong encouragement, the Administration will release the long-overdue 988 report as required by the National Suicide Hotline Designation Act (P.L. 116–172).

As Congress awaits the 988 report, and as you finish your work on the FY2022 bills, we ask that the final Conference Report for the FY2022 Labor-HHS Appropriations bill include:

- **\$1.583 billion** for the Community Mental Health Block Grant (MHBG) program.
- **10% set-aside** for mental health crisis systems in the Mental Health Block Grant (MHBG) program.
- **\$100 million** to establish the Mental Health Crisis Response Partnership Pilot Program to help communities create mobile crisis response teams that divert the response for mental health crises from law enforcement to behavioral health teams.
- **\$113.6 million** for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (NSPL), including \$7.2 million for specialized services for LGBTQ youth.
- **\$375 million** to provide grants to Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHCs) to provide treatment for those with mental health illness.
- **\$10 million** for the Behavioral Health Crisis and 988 Coordinating Office.

We recognize that over the last 18 months of the pandemic response, Congress has made unprecedented investments in mental health, substance use treatment, and suicide prevention. We must not miss the opportunity to leverage these gains and provide additional investments as needed to stand up the 988 system to reach its full potential to transform how our country responds to people in crisis. A continuing resolution of any length threatens our ability to fulfill the promise of 988 and meet the high and growing need for behavioral health treatment and care.

Thank you for your leadership and for your consideration of our request. If you have any questions or would like to discuss further, please contact Jennifer Snow, Director of Public Policy at the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), at jsnow@nami.org.

Sincerely,

2020 Mom
American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy
American Association for Psychoanalysis in Clinical Social Work
American Association on Health and Disability*
American Counseling Association
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
American Mental Health Counselors Association
American Psychiatric Association
Anxiety and Depression Association of America

Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare
Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies
Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness
Centerstone*
Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
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
Global Alliance for Behavioral Health & Social Justice
The Jed Foundation*
The Jewish Federations of North America
The Kennedy Forum
Maternal Mental Health Leadership Alliance
Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute*
Mental Health America
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 County Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability Directors
National Association of Peer Supporters*

National Association of Social Workers
National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors
National Council for Mental Wellbeing
National Federation of Families
National Register of Health Service Psychologists
Psychotherapy Action Network (PsiAN)*
REDC Consortium
RI International
Sandy Hook Promise
Schizophrenia & Psychosis Action Alliance
SMART Recovery
National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health*
The Trevor Project
Vibrant Emotional Health*
Well Being Trust

*Indicates affiliate membership