FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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(Washington, DC) - **As the 117th Congress comes to a close, the Mental Health Liaison Group (MHLG) implores Congress to enact a comprehensive, end-of-year package that prioritizes the mental and behavioral health of Americans.** We are deeply grateful for the leadership and groundwork done by Congress earlier this year in holding 15 hearings across multiple committees in both chambers to examine the extent of the mental health and substance use disorder crisis. As these hearings made abundantly clear, the crisis continues unabated, affecting people across the lifespan ranging from young children to older adults, at all income levels and in all populations, in both rural and urban parts of the country. Anxiety and depression are on the rise among people of all ages, more people are dying from overdoses, suicide and overdose are the leading cause of death for women in the first year following childbirth, and more teens and young adults are both dying by suicide or contemplating it than ever before. The crisis is even more acute in underserved communities and in communities of color. This dire situation has been exacerbated by the fact that many people needing care are not receiving it, when they need it the most, due to significant mental and behavioral health professional shortages causing long waiting lists for care and other reasons.

Congress has already developed and advanced a range of bipartisan solutions that could significantly address this unprecedented mental and behavioral health crisis; it is now time to pass these measures into law. We strongly urge Congress to pass a comprehensive end-of-year package that addresses this crisis without further delay.

The Mental Health Liaison Group (www.mhlg.org) is the leading mental and behavioral health coalition of national organizations representing consumers, family members, mental health and addiction providers, advocates, payers, and other stakeholders committed to strengthening Americans' access to mental health and addiction care. As trusted leaders in the field, our member organizations are dedicated to elevating the national conversation around mental health and addiction. Together we work to advance federal policies that support prevention, early intervention, treatment, and recovery services and supports.