

February 21, 2023

The Honorable Grace Napolitano
1610 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chris Stewart
166 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Napolitano and Representative Stewart,

The Mental Health Liaison Group (MHLG) writes to congratulate you both on your bipartisan partnership in co-chairing the Congressional Mental Health Caucus (Caucus) in the 118th Congress. As this new session begins, we applaud your unwavering commitment to addressing mental health and suicide prevention, and your leadership in finding bipartisan policy solutions to help save lives.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), in any given year 1 in 5 American adults will experience a mental illness. Meanwhile, 1 in 5 children have at some point experienced a serious mental illness, and over 50% of individuals will be diagnosed with a mental health condition at some point in their life.ⁱ Suicide is currently the 12th leading cause of death overall, and the second for those ages 10-34, with nearly 46,000 people lost to suicide in 2020.ⁱⁱ This is a public health issue that does not discriminate. However, we saw suicide rates decrease by 5% from 2018 to 2020, illustrating that comprehensive prevention programs and mental health supports can effectively save lives.ⁱⁱⁱ Under your leadership, we believe the Congressional Mental Health Caucus has the power to support and sustain lasting improvements to our country's mental health care systems.

Throughout your time in office, you have each supported bipartisan legislation to address mental health and suicide prevention, championing the needs of thousands of individuals across the country who experience mental health challenges. MHLG stands ready to be a resource for your offices as you continue this critical work.

Under your leadership, the Congressional Mental Health Caucus is well-positioned to support and sustain lasting improvements to our country's mental health care systems and improve suicide prevention efforts. Thank you for prioritizing these issues, and for your bipartisan commitment to destigmatize mental health and support individuals in need.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry
American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy
American Association for Psychoanalysis in Clinical Social Work
American Association of Nurse Anesthesiology
American Association of Psychiatric Pharmacists (AAPP)
American Association on Health and Disability
American Counseling Association
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
American Mental Health Counselor Association
American Occupational Therapy Association
American Psychiatric Association
Anxiety and Depression Association of America
Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare

Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness
Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
Children's Hospital Association
Clinical Social Work Association
Crisis Text Line
Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance
Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice
Inseparable
International OCD Foundation
International Society for Psychiatric Mental Health Nurses
Jewish Federations of North America
Mental Health America
NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals
National Alliance on Mental Illness
National Association for Behavioral Healthcare
National Association for Rural Mental Health
National Association of County Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability Directors
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Association of Social Workers
National Federation of Families
National League for Nursing
Network of Jewish Human Service Agencies
Postpartum Support International
Sandy Hook Promise
SMART Recovery
The Jed Foundation (JED)
The Kennedy Forum
The National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health
The Trevor Project
2020 Mom

ⁱ<https://www.cdc.gov/mentalhealth/learn/index.htm#:~:text=1%20in%205%20Americans%20will,illness%20in%20a%20given%20year.&text=1%20in%205%20children%2C%20either,a%20seriously%20debilitating%20mental%20illness.&text=1%20in%2025%20Americans%20lives,bipolar%20disorder%2C%20or%20major%20depression.>

ⁱⁱ<https://afsp.org/suicide-statistics/>

ⁱⁱⁱ<https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/databriefs/db433.htm>