

August 28, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate  
S-230 Capitol Bldg.  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer  
Minority Leader, U.S. Senate  
S-221 Capitol Bldg.  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives  
H-232 Capitol Bldg.  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Minority Leader, U.S. House of Representatives  
H-204 Capitol Bldg.  
Washington, D.C. 20515

**RE: Mental Health and Substance Use Communities Support \$4.5 Billion in SAMHSA Funding**

Dear Leader McConnell, Speaker Pelosi, Minority Leader Schumer and Minority Leader McCarthy:

The undersigned members of the Mental Health Liaison Group (MHLG) – a coalition of national organizations representing consumers, family members, mental health and substance use treatment providers, advocates and payers committed to strengthening access to mental health care and substance use treatment – are writing to express our strong support for \$4.5 billion in desperately needed funding for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), as provided in the Health, Economic Assistance, Liability Protection and Schools (HEALS) Act.

An appropriation of \$4.5 billion across key Mental Health and Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grants, suicide prevention programs, and Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHCs) will be crucial to address the wave of mental health and substance use triggered by the coronavirus pandemic. According to a recent Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Mortality and Morbidity (MMR) Weekly Report, one in four young adults between the ages of 18 and 24 say they have considered suicide in the past month because of the pandemic, further illustrating the nation's rapidly declining mental health during the pandemic. Similarly, as the pandemic began to affect our nation, drug overdoses increased 18 percent in March compared with last year, 29 percent in April and 42 percent in May, according to the Overdose Detection Mapping Application Program (ODMAP), a federal initiative that collects data from ambulance teams, hospitals and police.

Reports of the impact the financial crisis is having on front line providers are also disturbing. Nationwide field surveys demonstrate that, in the current financial environment, nearly half of organizations that provide mental health and substance use treatment services will not survive into January, 2021. On average, more than 80 percent of these providers have canceled, rescheduled or turned away patients. Further, providers of mental health and substance use services have received less than 1% of Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act Public Health and Social Service Emergency Fund (PHSSEF) allocations – with vast numbers of mental health and substance use treatment providers reporting that they have received no emergency assistance whatsoever.

With the converging mental health, substance use and fiscal crises presenting an enormous challenge to the entire behavioral health community, MHLG is seeking your bipartisan support for \$4.5 billion in SAMHSA emergency appropriations to meet the unprecedented needs of individuals, families and essential workers, and to provide needed assistance to the mental health care and substance use treatment providers struggling to battle the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic.

Sincerely,

*American Art Therapy Association*  
*American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy*  
*American Association for Psychoanalysis in Clinical Social Work*  
*American Association of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*  
*American Association of Nurse Anesthetists\**  
*American Association of Suicidology*  
*American Association on Health and Disability\**  
*American Foundation for Suicide Prevention*  
*American Mental Health Counselors Association*  
*American Occupational Therapy Association*  
*American Psychiatric Association*  
*American Psychological Association*  
*Anxiety and Depression Association of America*  
*Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies*  
*Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness*  
*Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder*  
*Clinical Social Work Association*  
*College of Psychiatric and Neurologic Pharmacists (CPNP)*  
*Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance*  
*Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy & Action*  
*Education Development Center\**  
*Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice*  
*International Certification & Reciprocity Consortium*  
*International OCD Foundation*  
*The Kennedy Forum*  
*Maternal Mental Health Leadership Alliance*  
*Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute\**  
*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 & Developmental Disability Directors*  
*National Association of Social Workers*  
*National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors*  
*National Board for Certified Counselors*  
*National Council for Behavioral Health*  
*National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health*  
*National Health Care for the Homeless Council\**  
*National League for Nursing*  
*National Register of Health Service Psychologists*  
*Psychotherapy Action Network (PsiAN)\**  
*Residential Eating Disorders Consortium*  
*Schizophrenia and Related Disorders Alliance of America (SARDAA)*  
*SMART Recovery*  
*The Trevor Project*  
*Trinity Health\**  
*Well Being Trust*

\* Affiliate Member