

December 24, 2020

The Honorable Alex M. Azar, Secretary
U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
200 Independence Avenue
Washington, DC 20201

Re: Request for Information (HHS-OS-2020-0017-0001 – Section D: Telehealth)

Dear Secretary Azar:

I am writing on behalf of the Mental Health Liaison Group (MHLG), a coalition of national organizations representing consumers, families, mental health and substance use treatment providers, advocates, and other stakeholders committed to strengthening access to high quality mental and behavioral health care. We greatly appreciate the opportunity to share our coalition members' recommendations and experiences with telehealth in mental health and substance use treatment services as described in the attached letter submitted earlier this year to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. We support the telehealth changes implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic and the additional recent changes being proposed by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, **but strongly urge further permanent expansion of telehealth to include services provided through audio-only devices and the elimination of current geographic and site restrictions.**

Thank you in advance for considering these comments. If you require additional information, please contact MHLG Chair Laurel Stine, Senior Director, Congressional & Federal Affairs and Partnerships with the American Psychological Association at lstine@apa.org, or MHLG Health Policy Committee Co-Chair Elizabeth Cullen, Counsel for Health Policy, The Jewish Federations of North America, at Elizabeth.cullen@jewishfederations.org.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth A. Cullen
Counsel for Health Policy
The Jewish Federations of North America
Co-Chair, MHLG Health Policy Committee