

January 26, 2018

The Honorable Joseph P. Kennedy III  
United States House of Representatives  
434 Canon House of Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Kennedy:

The undersigned national organizations in the Mental Health Liaison Group (MHLG) are writing to express our strong support for the Behavioral Health Coverage Transparency Act of 2018, H.R. 4778.

The MHLG is a coalition of national organizations representing consumers, family members, mental health and addiction providers, advocates, payers and other stakeholders committed to strengthening Americans' access to effective mental health and addiction care. Together, on behalf of the millions of Americans living with mental health and addiction disorders, their families, and communities, we advocate for public policies and funding to improve access to high-quality health care through prevention, early intervention, treatment and recovery services and supports.

The MHLG applauds your introduction of legislation to strengthen implementation and enforcement of federal rules covering mental health and substance use disorders treatment at parity with other health benefits. In unity, we advocated tirelessly for the enactment of the Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health and Addiction Equity Act of 2008, and recognize that increased transparency and improved accountability of health insurers is essential to fully realizing both the letter and spirit of this landmark law, and its application to the Affordable Care Act.

The Behavioral Health Coverage Transparency Act would require issuers to disclose the analysis they perform in making parity determinations; their denial rates for mental health versus medical claims and the reasons, and require federal regulators to conduct no less than 12 random audits per year. Additionally, it would create a central online portal so that consumers can access all information, as a one-stop shop, including information about their parity rights, information insurers submit about how they make parity decisions, results of audits, and serve to submit complaints. These key provisions will help ensure mental health and addiction coverage is in compliance with parity, and treatment ultimately becomes available to those in need.

Thank you for your leadership and strong dedication to mental health and substance use disorder parity. We look forward to working with you to ensure the enactment of this important legislation.

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 on Health and Disability  
American Dance Therapy Association  
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention  
American Group Psychotherapy Association  
American Mental Health Counselors Association  
American Occupational Therapy Association  
American Psychiatric Association  
American Psychoanalytic Association  
American Psychological Association  
American Society of Addiction Medicine  
Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare  
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law  
Campaign for Trauma Informed Policy and Practice  
Center for Clinical Social Work  
Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder  
Clinical Social Work Association  
College of Psychiatric and Neurologic Pharmacists  
Confederation of Independent Psychoanalytic Societies  
Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance  
Eating Disorders Coalition  
EMDR International Association  
Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice  
Mental Health America  
National Alliance on Mental Illness  
National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health  
National Association for Children's Behavioral Health  
National Association for Rural Mental Health  
National Association of Social Workers  
National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors  
National Council for Behavioral Health  
National Eating Disorders Association  
National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health  
National Health Care for the Homeless Council  
National Register of Health Service Psychologists  
NHMH - No Health without Mental Health  
Residential Eating Disorders Consortium  
School Social Work Association of America  
Treatment Communities of America  
Trinity Health