

September 21, 2018

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Paul Ryan  
Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Schumer, Speaker Ryan and Minority Leader Pelosi:

The Mental Health Liaison Group appreciates your leadership in passing legislation to help states address the opioid epidemic and expand access to needed substance use disorder (SUD) treatment. As you work to design a final agreement on the legislation, we urge you to include Section 1003 of H.R. 6, the Demonstration Project to Increase Substance Use Provider Capacity Under the Medicaid Program, which would help states address urgent workforce shortages and expand access to needed SUD care.

This provision would establish a five-year demonstration project to help state Medicaid programs increase SUD provider capacity by adding new providers and expanding the services they can offer. At least ten states would receive planning grants to assess current provider capacity, identify gaps in treatment, and develop strategies to increase provider capacity through recruitment, education, training, and technical assistance. Up to five of those states would receive federal funds at an enhanced matching rate for increases in SUD services over what the state provided in 2018. The Senate companion legislation to this provision, S. 3383, includes a technical change that would allow a greater range of providers to participate. We recommend that the final legislation include this change.

Lack of access to treatment is an urgent issue facing people with SUDs, including opioid use disorder. Unfortunately, many SUD providers do not currently have the capacity to participate in Medicaid. For example, providers new to Medicaid may need help launching information and electronic medical records systems, setting up a process for reviewing utilization of services, and tracking quality measures. Providing technical assistance to providers to help them participate in Medicaid could significantly expand access to needed SUD care and enhance the quality of SUD services.

As national organizations representing mental health and addiction providers, consumers, advocates, family members and other stakeholders, we urge you to ensure this critical provision is adopted as part of any final opioid conference agreement. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Allies for Independence \*  
American Academy of Pediatrics  
American Art Therapy Association  
American Association for Geriatric Psychiatry  
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 Foundation  
American Group Psychotherapy Association  
American Music Therapy Association \*  
American Nurses Association  
American Occupational Therapy Association  
American Psychiatric Nurses Association  
American Psychological Association  
American Society of Addiction Medicine  
American Therapeutic Recreation Association \*  
Anxiety and Depression Association of America  
Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare  
Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness  
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law  
Campaign for Trauma-Informed Policy and Practice  
Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder  
Clinical Social Work Association  
College of Psychiatric and Neurologic Pharmacists  
Confederation of Independent Psychoanalytic Societies of the United States  
Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance  
Eating Disorders Coalition  
Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice  
International Certification & Reciprocity Consortium  
The Jewish Federations of North America  
Mental Health America  
National Alliance on Mental Illness  
National Association for Rural Mental Health  
National Association of County Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability Directors  
National Association of Social Workers  
National Disability Rights Network  
National Eating Disorders Association  
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  
Residential Eating Disorders Coalition  
The Arc of the United States  
The Kennedy Forum  
The National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health

\*non-MHLG member