

May 21, 2019

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

Dear Representative Kennedy:

The undersigned national organizations in the Mental Health Liaison Group (MHLG) are writing to offer our strong support for the Behavioral Health Coverage Transparency Act of 2019.

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 commends the 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 of 2019 would require issuers to disclose the analysis they perform in making parity determinations; their denial rates for mental health versus medical/surgical claims and the reasons, and require federal regulators to conduct a minimum of 12 random audits of health plans per year. Additionally, it would create a central online portal so that consumers can easily access publicly available 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 continued 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 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 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
International OCD Foundation
Mental Health America
NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals
National Alliance on Mental Illness
National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health
National Association for Children's Behavioral Health
National Association for Behavioral Healthcare
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
SMART Recovery
Treatment Communities of America
Trinity Health