

July 26, 2022

The Honorable Katie Porter United States House of Representatives 1117 Longworth House Office Building Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Elizabeth Warren United States Senate 309 Hart Senate Office Building Washington, DC 20510 The Honorable Tony Cárdenas United States House of Representatives 2438 Rayburn House Office Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Porter, Representative Cárdenas and Senator Warren:

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 2022.

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 requiring coverage of mental health and substance use disorder 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 (Parity Act), 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. We applaud your efforts in helping to amend the Parity Act within the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 during the last Congress. Given the poor compliance of issuers and health plans in performing the comparative analyses required by law, as revealed by the federal agencies' report to Congress in January 2022, we are united in the belief that more action is needed.

The Behavioral Health Coverage Transparency Act of 2022 would require most plans and issuers to submit the analyses they perform in making parity determinations to the federal agencies; disclose data on their denial rates for mental health versus medical/surgical claims and the reasons; and provide information on network adequacy and reimbursement rates as a percentage of Medicare rates. The legislation would also require federal regulators to conduct a minimum of 40 random audits of health plans per year. Additionally, the bill 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 guidance to submit complaints. And the legislation would establish dedicated funding for consumer assistance programs to help individuals navigate the complaint process. These



key provisions will help ensure mental health and substance use disorder 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,

2020 Mom

American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry

American Academy of Social Work and Social Welfare

American Association for Psychoanalysis in Clinical Social Work

American Association on Health and Disability

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

American Group Psychotherapy Association

American Occupational Therapy Association

American Psychiatric Association

American Psychoanalytic Association

American Psychological Association

American Society of Addiction Medicine

Anxiety & Depression Association of America

Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare

Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law

Campaign for Trauma Informed Policy and Practice

Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder

Children's Hospital Association

Clinical Social Work Association

College of Psychiatric and Neurologic Pharmacists

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance

Eating Disorders Coalition

Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice

Inseparable

International OCD Foundation

International Society for Psychiatric Mental Health Nurses

Iewish Federations of North America

The Kennedy Forum

Legal Action Center

Maternal Mental Health Leadership Alliance

Mental Health America

NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals

National Alliance on Mental Illness

National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health

National Association for Behavioral Healthcare



National Association for Children's Behavioral Health

National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners

National Association of Social Workers

National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors

National Eating Disorders Association

National Federation of Families

National Health Care for the Homeless Council

National League for Nursing

No Health without Mental Health

Residential Eating Disorders Consortium

RI International

School Social Work Association of America

SMART Recovery