

March 12, 2024

The Honorable Chuck Schumer  
Senate Majority Leader  
322 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Senate Minority Leader  
S-230, The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mike Johnson  
Speaker, House of Representatives  
H-232, The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries  
House Minority Leader  
H-204, The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senate Majority Leader Schumer, Senate Minority Leader McConnell, Speaker Johnson, and House Minority Leader Jeffries,

On behalf of the Mental Health Liaison Group (MHLG), a coalition of national organizations representing consumers, families, mental health and addiction providers, advocates and other stakeholders committed to strengthening access to high-quality mental and behavioral health care, we write to urge leadership to include the reauthorization of the *Substance Use Disorder Prevention That Promotes Opioid Recovery and Treatment for Patients and Communities Act* (SUPPORT Act) within the forthcoming FY24 Funding Package ahead of the March 22<sup>nd</sup> deadline. With 136 Americans dying each day due to substance use disorders and co-occurring mental health conditions, American families and communities cannot wait any longer.<sup>1</sup>

Since the 2018 passage of SUPPORT Act, 13% of Americans have reported increasing or starting substance use as a way of coping with stress related to the pandemic,<sup>2</sup> and in 2023, overdose rates topped 112,000 for the first time in history, proving the importance of meeting the ever-changing needs of the American population.<sup>3</sup> Drug overdoses are also killing youth in unprecedented numbers: monthly total deaths by overdose have risen from 31 in July 2019 to 87 in May 2021, the period with the most recent data.<sup>4</sup> Deaths among adolescents involving fentanyl specifically also increased by 182% over the same two-year period.<sup>5</sup>

We applaud the hard work of both Chambers this Congress and support the public health provisions for the SUPPORT Act reauthorization reported out by the HELP Committee and passed by the House of Representatives in December. We also applaud the Committees for working on additional provisions in SUPPORT to maximize existing resources and ensure policies are responding to our current crisis. As you work to negotiate the second part of the FY24 Funding Package, we strongly urge the inclusion and passage of the SUPPORT reauthorization. Congress has the power to avert preventable American deaths due to substance use disorder and mental health conditions, but to do so Congress must act now.

We stand ready to serve as a resource if there are any questions. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

ACT Now for Mental Health

American Association for Psychoanalysis in Clinical Social Work

American Association of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

American Association of Psychiatric Pharmacists

American Association on Health and Disability

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

American Mental Health Counselors Association

American Nurses Association

American Occupational Therapy Association

American Psychiatric Association

American Psychological Association Services

American Therapeutic Recreation Association

Anxiety and Depression Association of America

Association for Behavioral & Cognitive Therapies

Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness

Children and Adults with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

Children's Hospital Association

Clinical Social Work Association

Crisis Residential Association

Crisis Text Line

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance

Employee Assistance Professionals Association Girls Inc.

IC & RC

International OCD Foundation

ISPN

Jewish Federations of North America

Legal Action Center

Maternal Mental Health Leadership Alliance

Meadows Mental Health

Mental Health America

National Alliance on Mental Illness

National Association for Behavioral Healthcare

National Association for Children's Behavioral Health

National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners

National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors

National Board for Certified Counselors

National Council for Mental Wellbeing

National League for Nursing

Network of Jewish Human Services Agencies

No Health without Mental Health

Policy Center for Maternal Mental Health

Psychotherapy Action Network

REDC Consortium

RI International

Sandy Hook Promise

SMART Recovery

The Kennedy Forum

Trust for America's Health

Vibrant Emotional Health

Wounded Warrior Project, Inc.