

November 14, 2023

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair, Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kay Granger
Chair, Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Susan Collins
Ranking Member, Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member, Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chair Murray, Ranking Member Collins, Chair Granger, and Ranking Member DeLauro -

On behalf of the undersigned organizations -- mental health and addiction providers; advocates; payers; individuals with lived experience and their families; and other stakeholders committed to strengthening Americans' access to mental health and addiction care -- **we are writing to urge Congress to pass the complete set of FY 2024 appropriations bills, to cover the full fiscal year.**

This includes passage of the full FY 2024 appropriations bill to fund the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies, and in so doing, provide the needed increases and technical adjustments in the programs addressing the needs, concerns and crises afflicting those with mental health and substance use challenges.

Our nation is facing a worsening mental health and substance use crisis, with far too many Americans facing a critical lack of access to lifesaving treatment and care. We applaud Congress for devoting substantial funds in recent years for mental health and substance use services. However, additional federal funding is needed to address the ongoing mental health and substance use crisis impacting your constituents.

2022 saw a new record of over 100,000 people dying by a drug related overdose.¹ Utilization of crisis services is projected to increase for the 988 Lifeline by 50 percent over the fiscal year 2023.² Our nation continues to face significant behavioral health workforce shortages impacting our most vulnerable communities in rural and underserved areas.³

A full year appropriations package ensures that necessary funding increases can be made, and so Congress, the Executive Branch and the States can continue to improve existing programs. Those who experience mental or behavioral health challenges must receive the care they need. These problems are national in scope and afflict states and your constituents.

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2023, October 11). Products - vital statistics rapid release - provisional drug overdose data. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/vsrr/drug-overdose-data.htm>

² Mental Health Liaison Group, *Appropriations Recommendations for Fiscal Year 2024*. Mental Health Liaison Group. (2023, March 20).

³ Heather Saunders, M. G., & 2023, J. (2023, January 12). A look at strategies to address behavioral health workforce shortages: Findings from a survey of state Medicaid programs. KFF. <https://www.kff.org/mental-health/issue-brief/a-look-at-strategies-to-address-behavioral-health-workforce-shortages-findings-from-a-survey-of-state-medicaid-programs/#:~:text=Documented%20workforce%20challenges%20contribute%20to,mental%20health%20workforce%20shortage%20area.>

Action taken by the House of Representatives on Tuesday gives Congress the opportunity to pass all 12 full year funding bills, and we urge that it do so well before the deadlines in early 2024. We urge that the 2024 LHHS bill provide robust support to the programs affecting those of our fellow citizens, friends, neighbors and loved ones with mental health or substance use challenges. To be sure, our organizations stand ready to answer any of your questions and address any of your concerns.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

American Association of Psychiatric Pharmacists (AAPP)

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

American Mental Health Counselor Association

American Society of Addiction Medicine

Anxiety and Depression Association of America

Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder

Crisis Text Line

Huntington's Disease Society of America

International OCD Foundation

International Society for Psychiatric Nurses

Maternal Mental Health Leadership Alliance

Mental Health America

National Alliance on Mental Illness

National Association of School Psychologists

National Association of Social Workers

National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors

National Council for Mental Wellbeing

RI International

Schizophrenia and Psychosis Action Alliance

SMART Recovery

Trust for America's Health