

April 2, 2013

The Honorable Patty Murray
U.S. Senate
154 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Murray:

On behalf of the millions of health professionals and individuals and families living with mental health and substance use conditions, the undersigned organizations commend you for introducing the Children's Trauma Recovery Act of 2013 (S. 380) and pledge our strong support to enact this legislation. We believe that the Children's Trauma Recovery Act, which will reauthorize the National Child Traumatic Stress Initiative (NCTSI), will strengthen an essential federal program that focuses on prevention, treatment, and recovery from traumatic stress experiences, supporting children, families, and providers nationwide.

We believe that the Children's Trauma Recovery Act will support programs and services that serve as a national resource for all child-serving systems. The broad mission of the NCTSI provides a strong national infrastructure and support for over 170 funded and affiliate programs and their partners who work to raise the standard of care and increase access to trauma-informed and evidence-based services and treatment. The NCTSI resources, training opportunities, and direct services are valuable resources for a variety of settings serving children and families, including mental health, child welfare, juvenile justice, schools, domestic violence, child protection, military families, primary care and pediatric clinics. The work of this initiative reaches children and families affected by all types of trauma, including physical and sexual abuse; domestic, school, and community violence; natural disasters, terrorism; military family challenges; severe bereavement and loss; and life-threatening injury and illness.

A Government Accountability Organization (GAO) report (GAO-02-813) published in 2002 revealed that large numbers of children experience trauma-related mental health problems, while at the same time facing many barriers to receiving appropriate mental health care. Further, findings from the Adverse Childhood Experiences Study have shown that if these difficult childhood experiences are not addressed with appropriate treatment, children may face serious consequences affecting their entire lives. Many of the children served by the NCTSI experience multiple adverse traumatic events. In fact, data suggest that 77 percent of the children receiving services have experienced more than one type of trauma and 31 percent have experienced five or more types of traumatic events. Children who receive the evidence-based and trauma-informed treatment provided by the NCTSI experience significant improvements in trauma symptoms, mental health diagnoses, and behavioral problems.

Since the inception of the NCTSI, the nation has expanded its understanding of the long-term impact of traumatic events for children and families. This legislation will reauthorize this critical initiative, allowing for the further acceleration of the science-to-service timeline and establishing widespread dissemination of evidence-based and trauma-informed treatments, training, and resources.

We applaud you for introducing the Children's Trauma Recovery Act. Your bill recognizes that trauma affects the lives of many children, families, communities, and child-serving systems, and establishes a strong infrastructure to help all of us in our work. S. 380 will also provide support for the continued NCTSI effort to document the effectiveness of this initiative and shape what is learned into recommendations for policy, treatment, and research advances. We strongly urge the Congress to promptly enact this important legislation.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
American Art Therapy Association
American Association for Geriatric Psychiatry
American Association of Pastoral Counselors
American Association on Health and Disability
American Counseling Association
American Dance Therapy Association
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
American Group Psychotherapy Association
American Mental Health Counseling Association
American Occupational Therapy Association
American Orthopsychiatric Association
American Psychiatric Association
American Psychiatric Nurses Association
American Psychological Association
Anxiety and Depression Association of America
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
Center for Clinical Social Work/ABE/ACSWA
Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
Clinical Social Work Association
Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance
Futures Without Violence
Mental Health America
National Alliance on Mental Illness
National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health
National Association for Children's Behavioral Health
National Association of Anorexia Nervosa & Associated Disorders
National Association of Social Workers
National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors (NASMHPD)
National Children's Alliance
National Coalition for Mental Health Recovery
National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare
National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health
Prevent Child Abuse America
School Social Work Association of America
The Trevor Project
Tourette Syndrome Association
uFOSTERsuccess