

# Mental Health Liaison Group

April 10, 2015

The Honorable Rob Portman  
U.S Senate  
448 Russell Office Building  
Washington DC 20510

The Honorable Martin Heinrich  
U.S. Senate  
702 Hart Office Building  
Washington DC 20510

Dear Senators Portman and Heinrich:

The undersigned national organizations representing consumers, family members, advocates, providers and professionals are pleased to express support for the Medical Evaluation Parity for Service Members (MEPS) Act (S. 646). As organizations that advocate for improved access to mental health and addiction services, including screening, assessment, early intervention, treatment and rehabilitation services and supports for Americans, we applaud your leadership in introducing legislation that promotes the mental health of our nation's servicemembers.

The MEPS would require the Department of Defense to screen military recruits for mental health disorders, as it routinely does for physical health conditions, and to review its ability to issue electronic health records for use by the Department of Veterans Affairs and other healthcare entities when servicemembers depart active duty.

A recent US Army study found that about 20% of Army recruits have mental health disorders, and half of soldiers who have attempted suicide first did so before joining the Army. In addition, research has shown that repeated overseas deployments, such as has occurred recently rather frequently, increase servicemembers' likelihood of developing post-traumatic stress disorder.

Your commitment to improving our Nation's military capability and the quality of life for our servicemembers, their families, and their fellow military members is commendable, and we thank you for undertaking such a goal. We believe the MEPS will aid substantially in early detection and treatment of mental health conditions in

National organizations representing consumers, family members, advocates, professionals and providers  
c/o Laurel Stine, J.D., American Psychological Association at [lstine@apa.org](mailto:lstine@apa.org)  
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servicemembers, and we welcome the opportunity to work with you and your staff to help enact this important legislation.

Sincerely,

American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy  
American Association of Pastoral Counselors  
American Counseling Association  
American Dance Therapy Association  
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention/SPAN USA  
American Group Psychotherapy Association  
American Mental Health Counselors Association  
American Nurses Association  
American Orthopsychiatric Association  
American Psychoanalytic Association  
American Psychological Association  
Anxiety and Depression Association of America  
Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare  
Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness  
Clinical Social Work Association  
Clinical Social Work Guild  
Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance  
Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy & Action  
NAADAC, The Association for Addiction Professionals  
National Alliance on Mental Illness  
National Association for Children's Behavioral Health  
National Association for Rural Mental Health  
National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders (ANAD)  
National Association of Counties \*  
National Association of County Behavioral Health & Developmental Disability Directors  
National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems  
National Association of Social Workers  
National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors  
National Disability Rights Network  
National League for Nursing  
No Health without Mental Health  
Schizophrenia and Related Disorders Alliance of America  
The National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health  
The Trevor Project  
Tourette Syndrome Association  
Treatment Communities of America

\*MHLG observer