

# Mental Health Liaison Group

November 14, 2016

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Senate Majority Leader  
317 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Harry Reid  
Senate Minority Leader  
522 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leader McConnell and Minority Leader Reid:

On behalf of the undersigned national organizations, we are writing to strongly urge you to bring up and swiftly pass comprehensive mental health reform legislation this year.

We applaud the work of the Senate HELP Committee, which unanimously approved S. 2680, the Mental Health Reform Act, in April. The House has also shown their strong, bipartisan support for mental health by passing H.R. 2646, the Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act by a vote of 422-2 in July.

These bills have been developed with the broad support of the mental health advocacy community. It is past time that we move these solutions forward and into law. We cannot afford to wait another year or another Congress to take action.

We have a mental health crisis in this country. Over 68 million Americans have experienced a mental health or substance use disorder in the past year, but half did not get any mental health care in the past year. America's suicide rate is the highest it's been in 30 years, and the rates of homelessness, incarceration, and disability as a result of untreated and undiagnosed mental and behavioral health conditions continue to rise.

S. 2680 and H.R. 2646 will improve the coordination of federal mental health resources, combat suicide, increase early access to mental health services, address our growing workforce shortage, advance integrated health care delivery, and strengthen mental health parity. And we need your leadership to pass and resource these critical policies by this year's end.

Thank you for your consideration. We are eager to stand with you to pass the solutions we need this year and improve the lives of millions of Americans impacted by mental and behavioral health conditions.

Sincerely,

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)  
and Debbie Plotnick, MSS, MLSP, Mental Health America at [dplotnick@mentalhealthamerica.net](mailto:dplotnick@mentalhealthamerica.net)

American Academy of Pediatrics  
American Art Therapy Association  
American Association for Geriatric Psychiatry  
American Association of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry  
American Association on Health and Disability \*  
American Dance Therapy Association  
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention  
American Group Psychotherapy Association  
American Mental Health Counselors Association  
American Occupational Therapy Association  
American Orthopsychiatric Association  
American Psychiatric 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 49  
Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance  
Eating Disorders Coalition  
Emergency Nurses Association  
The Jewish Federations of North America  
Lakeshore Foundation \*\*  
Mental Health America  
National Alliance to End Homelessness  
National Alliance on Mental Illness  
National Association for Children's Behavioral Health  
National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems  
National Association of Social Workers  
National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors  
National Health Care for the Homeless Council \*  
National League for Nursing  
The National MS Society \*  
The National Register of Health Service Psychologists  
No Health without Mental Health  
Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association and Foundation  
Sandy Hook Promise  
School Social Work Association of America  
Tourette Association of America  
The Trevor Project  
Trinity Health \*

\*Affiliate Member

\*\*not MHLG member