

July 13, 2023

The Honorable Kay Granger
Chair, House Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
2308 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member, House Appropriations Cmte.
U.S. House of Representatives
2413 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

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

The Honorable Susan Collins
Vice Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee
U.S. Senate
413 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairs Granger and Murray, Ranking Member DeLauro and Vice Chair Collins:

We are writing to emphasize the continuing need for increased investment in mental health and substance use disorder (MH/SUD) programs funded through the Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill. As you know, our nation is facing acute mental health and substance use crises. We are grateful for the important investments your Committees have made in MH/SUD programs leading up to this year and are concerned that the funding allocation proposed for the House Labor-HHS-Education Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 appropriations bill could reverse those recent gains. Far too many Americans still face a critical lack of access to lifesaving treatment and care.

According to the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), an estimated 157 million Americans, or 47 percent of the population, live in one of 6,469 Mental Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs) as of December 2022, and the nation needs an additional 7,902 mental health providers to fill these shortage gaps¹ and provide essential care to children, youth, adults and seniors. As data continue to show near-record levels of overdose and suicide deaths, it is vital that our communities, clinicians, patients and families be supported with greater, not fewer, resources in their time of need.

As Congress debates appropriations for FY 2024, it is vital to invest in the full continuum of care, services and research devoted to mental health and addiction through SAMHSA, HRSA, NIH, CDC and other key agencies funded in the Labor-HHS-Education bill. A failure to address the mental health and SUD needs across our nation, particularly in rural and underserved areas, puts lives at stake and will result in an increased number of unnecessary deaths and greater costs to society, government programs, and taxpayers as millions of people with treatable or preventable conditions become sicker, experience broader health care challenges and require care that is increasingly expensive.

We are mindful of the procedural constraints facing appropriators. However, the COVID pandemic exposed and exacerbated enormous gaps between the resources available to address our mental health, SUD and suicide crises. We hope the Committee and Congress as a whole will ultimately provide an

¹<https://data.hrsa.gov/Default/GenerateHPSAQuarterlyReport>

allocation sufficient to meet our nation's growing demand for MH/SUD services and that you will provide total funding for these programs in excess of their FY 2023 levels. It is important to meet these crises with the level of commitment and attention they deserve and that our families, communities and nation need.

Sincerely,

American Association of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
American Association of Nurse Anesthesiology
American Association of Psychiatric Pharmacists
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
American Society of Addiction Medicine
Anxiety and Depression Association of America
Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare (AABH)
IC&RC
Inseparable
Maternal Mental Health Leadership Alliance
Mental Health America
National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)
National Association of School Psychologists
National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors
National Council for Mental Wellbeing
REDC Consortium
Sandy Hook Promise
SMART Recovery
The Kennedy Forum
The National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health