



December 17, 2021

The Honorable Patty Murray  
United States Senate  
156 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Roy Blunt  
United States Senate  
135 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2358-B Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1036 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

RE: FY2022 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations Conference

Dear Senators Murray and Blunt and Representatives DeLauro and Cole:

On behalf of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), we are writing to express our sincere gratitude to you for the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies (Labor-HHS) Subcommittee's critical investments in enhancing mental health services. We applaud your continued bipartisan commitment to transforming our nation's system of mental health care.

NAMI is the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for the millions of people affected by mental illness. The communities we serve and advocate for are as diverse as our nation. NAMI is a voice for youth and adolescents, veterans and service members, individuals involved with the criminal justice system, those experiencing homelessness, family caregivers, and everyday Americans who are impacted by mental illness. We are all connected by the shared hope of new and innovative treatments, improved health care coverage, and support through recovery.

On behalf of the individuals NAMI represents, we implore you to continue working to ensure that crisis response services are operational in every state and community across the country before 988 rolls out in July 2022. While 988 is at its core a simple, nationwide, three-digit number, there is nothing simple about its implementation. We need to ensure that help is available to every person that dials 988, and many communities are not yet ready to deal with the demand for crisis care. We need all stakeholders – federal, state and local – working together urgently and cooperatively to ensure 988 call centers are ready by next July, and to develop the additional crisis services needed to respond to 988 calls.

You and your colleagues on the Appropriations Committee have made unprecedented investments in mental health, substance use, and suicide prevention in the last two years, but we must not miss the

opportunity to leverage these investments. We urgently need significant investments in mental health crisis services to stand up the 988 system to reach its full potential to transform how our country responds to people in crisis.

We are also optimistic the Department of Health and Human Services will release outstanding 988 reports as required by the National Suicide Hotline Designation Act (P.L. 116–172).

While Congress awaits the 988 reports, we appreciate your consideration of the below recommendations for inclusion in the final FY2022 Labor HHS Appropriations Conference Report:

- \$100 million to establish the Mental Health Crisis Response Partnership Pilot Program, to help communities create mobile crisis response teams that divert the response for mental health crises from law enforcement to mobile crisis teams staffed by mental health professionals
- \$113.6 million for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (NSPL)
- An increase in the Mental Health Block Grant (MHBG) to \$1.583 billion, with 10 percent set aside for mental health crisis systems
- \$375 million for Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHC) to provide grants to clinics certified by their State to provide treatment for those with mental illness, which must include crisis services
- \$10 million for a Behavioral Health Crisis and 988 Coordinating Office to coordinate federal activities on 988 and crisis services implementation

We continue to urge Congress to use its broad oversight powers, its power of the purse, and its legislative authorities to ensure that communities have the necessary services in place for a successful July 2022 roll out of 988 – and future development of crisis services to appropriately respond to 988 calls. It is essential to act quickly to fund and implement important components of the overall 988 system, including 24/7 local crisis call centers staffed by crisis counselors, mobile response teams staffed by mental health professionals, and crisis stabilization services that connect people to follow-up care.

Again, thank you for your leadership in transforming mental health care in America. If you have any questions or would like to discuss, please contact me at [Hwesolowski@nami.org](mailto:Hwesolowski@nami.org).

Sincerely,



Hannah Wesolowski  
Chief Advocacy Officer  
National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)