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August 4, 2015

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The Honorable Chris Murphy
United States Senate
136 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Bill Cassidy, M.D.
United States Senate
703 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senators Murphy and Cassidy,

On behalf of the American Psychiatric Association (APA), the national medical specialty society representing more than 36,000 physicians specializing in psychiatry, we are writing to support your Mental Health Reform Act of 2015. This legislation would bring significant reforms and improvements to care for our patients and for those who currently lack access to needed treatment.

As you know, individuals and their families are struggling every day with mental health crises, many of which could be prevented if our nation enacted comprehensive mental health reform. Fourteen million Americans suffer from serious mental illness, yet almost 40% of these individuals receive no treatment at all. Furthermore, despite recent progress, widespread discrimination and stigma continues to harm our patients and hinder efforts of the treatment community.

Your bipartisan legislation addresses these challenges by ensuring better coordination of federal mental health resources, substantially improving enforcement of mental health parity, establishing a *Nationwide Strategy* to address the mental health workforce shortage, and increasing authorized funding for important research activities within the National Institute of Mental Health, among other notable provisions. We are pleased that this legislation closely aligns with efforts to enact comprehensive mental health reform in the House, especially those led by Representatives Tim Murphy and Eddie Bernice Johnson in H.R. 2646, the Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act.

We applaud your leadership and dedication to improving the lives of millions of Americans who suffer from mental illness and substance use disorders and we look forward to working with you and the Congress to pass bipartisan, bicameral comprehensive mental health reform this year.

Sincerely,

Renée Binder, M.D.
President

Saul Levin, M.D., M.P.A.
CEO and Medical Director