

April 5, 2016

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader McConnell:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations we are writing to urge you to bring the Mental Health Reform Act of 2016 to the Senate floor for a vote in April.

We have a mental health crisis in this country. Every day millions of Americans are going without the treatment they need and families everywhere are struggling to find care for their loved ones. The rates of suicide, homelessness, incarceration, and disability as a result of untreated and undiagnosed mental illness continue to rise.

Following the shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary that took the lives of 20 children and 6 educators, Congress came together to look for solutions to fix our broken mental health system. We have been honored to work with members of the Senate and House in support of the introduction of many strong, bipartisan bills. After 3 years, it is time that we now move these solutions forward and pass comprehensive mental health reform. We cannot afford to wait another year or another Congress to take action.

The Senate HELP Committee has passed a meaningful, bipartisan bill with unanimous support that will improve the coordination of mental health resources, increase early access to mental health services, address our growing workforce shortage, advance integrated service delivery, and strengthen mental health parity. There is clear bipartisan support for advancing this legislation, as well as policies to reform our criminal justice system, increase access to acute inpatient care, and expand community-based mental health and substance use disorder care.

These critical policies have been developed and introduced with the broad support of the mental health advocacy community, and we now need your leadership to pass mental health reform and appropriately resource any mental health reform measures that are sent to the President's desk.

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

Sincerely,

Ascension Health
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
American Group Psychotherapy Association
American Psychiatric Association
American Psychological Association
American Association on Health and Disability
Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness
American Association of Pastoral Counselors
Association for Behavioral & Cognitive Therapies
Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare
Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
Clinical Social Work Association
Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance
Eating Disorders Coalition
Eating Disorder Coalition of Iowa
IC&RC
The Jewish Federations of North America
Mental Health America
The National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health
National Alliance on Mental Illness
National Association of County Behavioral Health & Developmental Disability Directors
National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems
National Association for Rural Mental Health
National Association of Social Workers
National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors
National Association of State Directors of Special Education
National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors
National Council for Behavioral Health
National Register of Health Service Psychologists
No Health without Mental Health
Parity Implementation Coalition
Renewed Support
Sandy Hook Promise
School Social Work Association of America
Trinity Health