September 22, 2020

The Honorable Dan Sullivan  
U.S. Senate  
302 Hart Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jacky Rosen  
U.S. Senate  
144 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Sullivan and Rosen,

The Mental Health Liaison Group (MHLG), a coalition of national organizations representing consumers, families, mental health and addiction providers, advocates and other stakeholders committed to strengthening access to high-quality mental and behavioral health care, is writing to express our strong support for S. 4211, the Facilitating Reforms that Offer Necessary Telehealth in Every Rural (FRONTIER) Community Act, which would expand access to mental health services through telemedicine in frontier states. Your leadership on this issue is critical for individuals with mental health conditions in communities that traditionally lack access to needed services and providers.

People living with behavioral health conditions need timely and safe access to mental health and substance use disorder services during this crisis. The pandemic is exacerbating existing behavioral health issues and leading to new instances of individuals suffering from anxiety, depression, and substance misuse, and “originating site” requirements on the use of telemedicine for mental health services only exacerbate the lack of access our frontier states experience.

Your legislation expands access to mental health services through telehealth in frontier states and makes the change permanent. We applaud you for removing the “originating site” requirement in existing law. Further, we commend you directing the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and the Department of Agriculture, in consultation with the Indian Health Service (IHS) and the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), to award grants for broadband infrastructure and provide additional telehealth flexibility for Indian Health Service facilities.

All of these provisions are essential to the frontier states: Alaska, Montana, Nevada, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming. This legislation will grant individuals experiencing mental health conditions access to safe and timely care and will help mitigate some of the broadband issues that frontier states and Indian Health Service facilities face.

The MHLG thanks you for your bipartisan commitment to improving access to telehealth for Americans who need mental health treatment and live in frontier communities. We pledge our support to help you move this legislation through Congress.
Sincerely,

American Art Therapy Association
American Association for Geriatric Psychiatry
American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy
American Association for Psychoanalysis in Clinical Social Work
American Association of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
American Association of Suicidology
American Association on Health and Disability
The American Counseling Association
American Psychiatric Association
American Psychological Association
Anxiety and Depression Association of America
Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare
Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness
Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
College of Psychiatric and Neurologic Pharmacists (CPNP)
The Confederation of Independent Psychoanalytic Societies
Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance
Education Development Center
Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice
Inseparable
International OCD Foundation
Lakeshore Foundation
Maternal Mental Health Leadership Alliance
NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals
National Alliance on Mental Illness
National Association for Rural Mental Health
National Association of Social Workers
National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors
National Federation of Families for Children’s Mental Health
Postpartum Support International
Psychotherapy Action Network Advocacy
Schizophrenia and Related Disorders Alliance of America
The Trevor Project
Well Being Trust