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Suite 900
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June 25, 2019

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The Honorable Lamar Alexander, Chair
Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray, Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Alexander and Ranking Member Murray:

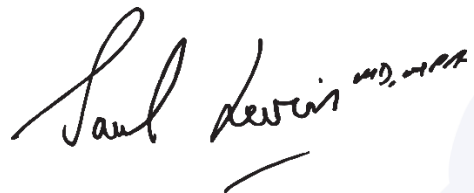
On behalf of the American Psychiatric Association (APA), the national medical specialty association representing over 38,500 psychiatric physicians, I want to thank you for including S. 1737, the Mental Health Parity Compliance Act, in the Lower Health Care Costs Act (S.1895). Introduced by Senator Christopher Murphy (D-CT) and Senator Bill Cassidy (R-LA), the Mental Health Parity Compliance Act will help enhance health plan transparency and promote compliance with the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act (MHPAEA).

Ensuring access to quality evidence-based services to treat mental health and substance use disorders (MH/SUDs) is and should remain a nonpartisan issue, particularly at a time when our nation is experiencing an ongoing suicide epidemic and opioid crisis. Even a small delay in coverage for MH/SUD services can pose irreversible harm to individual patients and produce higher downstream costs to the health care and social service systems, resulting in additional inpatient hospitalizations, patient death or disability, and avoidable emergency room utilization and boarding.

The Mental Health Parity Compliance Act requires plans to show their work, strengthens oversight by regulatory authorities and produces greater transparency by insurers to better guarantee equitable coverage and treatment of MH/SUD services.

We look forward to continuing to work with the Committee to make mental health parity the reality that Congress envisioned in enacting the MHPAEA. If you have any questions, please contact Mike Troubh at mtroubh@psych.org or (202) 559-3571.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Saul Levin" in a cursive script. To the right of the name, the letters "MD, MPA" are written in a smaller, more upright script. A short horizontal line is drawn below the signature.

Saul Levin, MD, MPA, FRCP-E
CEO and Medical Director

CC: The Honorable Bill Cassidy, M.D.
The Honorable Christopher Murphy