

July 26, 2022

The Honorable Katie Porter
United States House of Representatives
1117 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tony Cárdenas
United States House of Representatives
2438 Rayburn House Office
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Elizabeth Warren
United States Senate
309 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Representative Porter, Representative Cárdenas and Senator Warren:

The undersigned national organizations in the Mental Health Liaison Group (MHLG) are writing to offer our strong support for the Behavioral Health Coverage Transparency Act of 2022.

The MHLG is a coalition of national organizations representing consumers, family members, mental health and addiction providers, advocates, payers and other stakeholders committed to strengthening Americans' access to effective mental health and addiction care. Together, on behalf of the millions of Americans living with mental health and addiction disorders, their families, and communities, we advocate for public policies and funding to improve access to high-quality health care through prevention, early intervention, treatment and recovery services and supports.

The MHLG commends the introduction of legislation to strengthen implementation and enforcement of federal rules requiring coverage of mental health and substance use disorder treatment at parity with other health benefits. In unity, we advocated tirelessly for the enactment of the Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health and Addiction Equity Act of 2008 (Parity Act), and recognize that increased transparency and improved accountability of health insurers is essential to fully realizing both the letter and spirit of this landmark law. We applaud your efforts in helping to amend the Parity Act within the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 during the last Congress. Given the poor compliance of issuers and health plans in performing the comparative analyses required by law, as revealed by the federal agencies' report to Congress in January 2022, we are united in the belief that more action is needed.

The Behavioral Health Coverage Transparency Act of 2022 would require most plans and issuers to submit the analyses they perform in making parity determinations to the federal agencies; disclose data on their denial rates for mental health versus medical/surgical claims and the reasons; and provide information on network adequacy and reimbursement rates as a percentage of Medicare rates. The legislation would also require federal regulators to conduct a minimum of 40 random audits of health plans per year. Additionally, the bill would create a central online portal so that consumers can easily access publicly available information, as a one-stop shop, including information about their parity rights, information insurers submit about how they make parity decisions, results of audits, and guidance to submit complaints. And the legislation would establish dedicated funding for consumer assistance programs to help individuals navigate the complaint process. These

key provisions will help ensure mental health and substance use disorder coverage is in compliance with parity, and treatment ultimately becomes available to those in need.

Thank you for your continued leadership and strong dedication to mental health and substance use disorder parity. We look forward to working with you to ensure the enactment of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

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American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry
American Academy of Social Work and Social Welfare
American Association for Psychoanalysis in Clinical Social Work
American Association on Health and Disability
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
American Group Psychotherapy Association
American Occupational Therapy Association
American Psychiatric Association
American Psychoanalytic Association
American Psychological Association
American Society of Addiction Medicine
Anxiety & Depression Association of America
Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
Campaign for Trauma Informed Policy and Practice
Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
Children's Hospital Association
Clinical Social Work Association
College of Psychiatric and Neurologic Pharmacists
Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance
Eating Disorders Coalition
Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice
Inseparable
International OCD Foundation
International Society for Psychiatric Mental Health Nurses
Jewish Federations of North America
The Kennedy Forum
Legal Action Center
Maternal Mental Health Leadership Alliance
Mental Health America
NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals
National Alliance on Mental Illness
National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health
National Association for Behavioral Healthcare

National Association for Children's Behavioral Health
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Association of Social Workers
National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors
National Eating Disorders Association
National Federation of Families
National Health Care for the Homeless Council
National League for Nursing
No Health without Mental Health
Residential Eating Disorders Consortium
RI International
School Social Work Association of America
SMART Recovery