

September 24, 2020

The Honorable Max Rose  
United States House of Representatives  
1529 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Denver Riggleman  
United States House of Representatives  
1022 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable David McKinley  
United States House of Representatives  
2239 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Gilbert Ray Cisneros, Jr.  
United States House of Representatives  
431 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Anthony Brindisi  
United States House of Representatives  
239 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Morgan Griffith  
United States House of Representatives  
2202 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representatives Rose, McKinley, Brindisi, Riggleman, Cisneros, Griffith, and Upton,

The Mental Health Liaison Group (MHLG), a coalition of national organizations representing consumers, family members, mental health and addiction providers, advocates, and other stakeholders thanks you for introducing the *Dr. Lorna Breen Health Care Provider Protection Act* (H.R. 8094). This legislation will reduce and prevent suicide and mental and behavioral health conditions among health care professionals, sometimes referred to as “burn out.”

Health care professionals have long experienced high levels of stress and burnout, and the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated these issues. Dr. Lorna Breen, for whom the legislation is named, was a physician who supervised an emergency department during the pandemic, and tragically died by suicide. We must prioritize the mental health of our frontline medical professionals who are caring for some of our most vulnerable patients, and encourage help seeking behaviors for mental health concerns and substance use disorders by reducing stigma around seeking help.

Suicide is the 10<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death in the United States, and physicians have the highest suicide rate of any profession in the U.S., with a rate of 28 to 40 suicides per 100,000 doctors in 2018. That is nearly double the rate of the general population, with 12.3 suicides per 100,000 people. Therefore, there is a great need for this legislation, which:

- Establishes grants for training health care professionals in evidence-informed strategies to reduce and prevent suicide, burnout, mental health conditions and substance use disorders, and improve health care professionals’ well-being and job satisfaction.
- Identifies and disseminates evidence-informed best practices for reducing and preventing suicide and burnout among health care professionals, training health care professionals in appropriate strategies, and promoting their mental and behavioral health and job satisfaction.
- Establishes a national evidence-based education and awareness campaign targeting health care professionals to encourage them to seek support and treatment for mental and behavioral health concerns.

- Establishes grants for employee education, peer-support programming, and mental and behavioral health treatment, and will be prioritized to providers in current or former COVID-19 hotspots.
- Establishes a comprehensive study (with recommendations) on health care professional mental and behavioral health and burnout, including the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on such professionals' health.

There is a great need to ensure that our health care professionals have the resources to support their mental health, prevent suicide, and mitigate burn out, which has become more apparent considering the COVID-19 pandemic. The MHLG thanks you for introducing this important legislation that will help to reduce suicide rates and save lives.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Pediatrics  
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  
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention  
American Group Psychotherapy Association  
American Mental Health Counselors Association  
American Nurses Association  
American Psychiatric Association  
American Psychiatric Nurses Association (APNA)  
American Psychological Association  
American Society of Addiction Medicine  
Anxiety and Depression Association of America  
Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness  
Centerstone  
Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder  
Children's Hospital Association  
Clinical Social Work Association  
Confederation of Independent Psychoanalytic Societies  
Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance  
Eating Disorders Coalition  
Education Development Center  
Emergency Nurses Association  
Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice  
Inseparable  
The Kennedy Forum  
Maternal Mental Health Leadership Alliance  
Mental Health America

NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals  
National Alliance on Mental Illness  
National Association for Children’s Behavioral Health  
National Association for Rural Mental Health  
National Association of County Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability Directors (NACBHDD)  
National Association of Social Workers  
National Board for Certified Counselors  
National Council for Behavioral Health  
National Eating Disorders Association  
National League for Nursing  
Postpartum Support International (PSI)  
Psychotherapy Action Network Advocacy  
Sandy Hook Promise  
Schizophrenia And Related Disorders Alliance of America (SARDAA)  
The National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health  
The Trevor Project  
Well Being Trust  
2020 Mom