

November 4, 2022

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair, Senate Labor-HHS-Education
Appropriations Subcommittee
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Ranking Member, Senate Labor-HHS-
Education Appropriations Subcommittee
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chair, House Appropriations Committee
Chair, House Labor-HHS-Education
Appropriations Subcommittee
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member, House Appropriations
Committee
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole
Ranking Member, House Labor-HHS-
Education Appropriations Subcommittee
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Support 988 crisis care continuum in the Conference Report for the FY2023 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill

Dear Senators and Representatives:

We are a coalition of national organizations representing people with behavioral health conditions, family members, mental health and substance use disorder treatment providers, advocates, and other stakeholders focused on working together to advance federal support for 988 crisis services. We thank you for the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies (Labor-HHS) Subcommittee's critical investments, both ongoing and new, for mental health programs. We write today to urge you and your colleagues to pass these investments into law as soon as possible to continue building availability of and access to high-quality, lifesaving care and treatment.

Our nation's ability to respond to behavioral health crises in the same way we respond to other medical emergencies – with prompt, effective, and culturally competent care – is essential to our collective well-being. Since July when the new three-digit crisis number became universally available, the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline has seen increased volume in calls, chats, and texts. That volume is projected to continue growing, and we believe it is essential to act quickly to continue to fund and implement important components of the overall 988 system: 24/7 call centers staffed by

mental health professionals, mobile response teams, and crisis stabilization services that connect people to follow-up care.

We are grateful that H.R. 6833, the FY2023 Continuing Resolution (CR), included \$62 million to help ensure that the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline can continue expanding suicide prevention and crisis services associated with 988 during the period of the CR. As you finish your work on the FY2023 bills, we ask that the final Conference Report for the FY2023 Labor-HHS Appropriations bill include:

- **\$1.42 billion** for the Community Mental Health Block Grant (MHBG), including a **10% set-aside** for mental health crisis services within the MHBG
- **\$60 million** to expand the Mental Health Crisis Response Partnership Pilot Program
- **\$747 million** for the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, including **\$30 million** to provide specialized services for LGBTQ+ youth
- **\$400 million** for Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHCs)
- **\$10 million** for the Behavioral Health Crisis and 988 Coordinating Office

Additional federal investments are needed to strengthen the 988 system to transform how our country responds to people in crisis. A continuing resolution of any length threatens our ability to meet the high and growing need for behavioral health treatment and care.

Thank you for your leadership and for considering our request. If you have any questions or would like to discuss further, please contact Jennifer Snow, Director of Public Policy at the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), at jsnow@nami.org.

Sincerely,

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP)
American Psychiatric Association
American Psychological Association
Centerstone
Inseparable
Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute (MMHPI)
Mental Health America (MHA)
National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)
National Association for Behavioral Healthcare (NABH)
National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors (NASMHPD)
The Kennedy Forum
The Trevor Project
Vibrant Emotional Health