



## **Bipartisan Anna Westin Legacy Act Passed U.S. House of Representatives Energy and Commerce Committee**

WASHINGTON, D.C. (May 25, 2022)- The Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy & Action (EDC) celebrates the passage of the Anna Westin Legacy Act ([H.R.7249](#)) in the U.S. House of Representatives Energy and Commerce Committee and is awaiting a vote on the House floor. Last week, the Energy and Commerce Committee held a hearing on the Restoring Hope for Mental Health and Well-Being Act of 2022 ([H.R. 7666](#)), including the Anna Westin Legacy Act. The legislation passed through the committee unanimously. The Anna Westin Legacy Act would reauthorize the Center of Excellence for Eating Disorders to continue training primary health care professionals on eating disorders screening, brief intervention, and referral to care (SBIRT).

The Center of Excellence for Eating Disorders was founded in 2018 as part of the Anna Westin Act. Key provisions of the Anna Westin Act were passed within the 21st Century CURES Act ([P.L. 114-255](#)). The passage of the Anna Westin Act was EDC's first major victory for the eating disorders community. Since its founding, the Center of Excellence for Eating Disorders has trained over 7,000 providers on eating disorders.

The EDC extends gratitude to Representatives Doris Matsui (D-CA-06), David McKinley (R-WV-01), Ted Deutch (D-FL-22), and Jeff Van Drew (R-NJ-02) for leading the Anna Westin Legacy Act and pushing for its inclusion in the Restoring Hope for Mental Health and Well-Being Act of 2022. The EDC also thanks Chairman Frank Pallone (D-NJ-06) and Ranking Member Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-WA-05) for their committee leadership and advancing this important legislation.

The COVID-19 pandemic has negatively impacted the mental health of Americans across the nation, with youth exhibiting the steepest declines in mental health. Medical admissions for adolescents with eating disorders more than doubled in 2020.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, eating disorders diagnoses have increased 25% overall for youth ages 12 to 18 since the onset of the pandemic.<sup>2</sup> Despite the increase in prevalence, many pediatric and adult primary care providers lack training in identifying eating disorder symptoms. Only 20% of

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<sup>1</sup> Alana K. Otto, Jessica M. Jary, Julie Sturza, Catherine A. Miller, Natalie Prohaska, Terrill Bravender, Jessica Van Huysse; Medical Admissions Among Adolescents With Eating Disorders During the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Pediatrics* October 2021; 148 (4): e2021052201. 10.1542/peds.2021-052201

<sup>2</sup> Dave Little, MD, Adrianna Teriakidis, PhD, Eric Lindgren, JD, Steven Allen, MD, Eric Barkley, Lily Rubin-Miller, MPH, April 2021, <https://epicresearch.org/articles/increase-in-adolescent-hospitalizations-related-to-eating-disorder>

medical schools in the United States offer elective eating disorder training and only 6% require training in the subject.<sup>3</sup>

“The National Center of Excellence for Eating Disorders (NCEED) is thrilled about the recent progress for the Anna Westin Legacy Act, said **Christine M. Peat, PhD, FAED, LP, Director, National Center of Excellence for Eating Disorders, Associate Professor of Psychiatry, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.**” “Its passage in the House Energy and Commerce Committee recognizes the importance of NCEED’s mission to equip healthcare clinicians with the skills necessary to detect and manage eating disorders. Being able to continue this work will ensure that those affected by these conditions receive appropriate care in a timely and effective fashion.”

“The hearts of our community are full with the advancement of the Anna Westin Legacy Act as we move one step closer to passage,” said **Chase Bannister, MDIV, MSW, LCSW, CEDS, President of EDC’s Board of Directors.** “It is critical that we provide eating disorder training for healthcare professionals, and the time for action is now. Eating disorders are a devastating and life-threatening illness that affects millions of Americans, many of whom will, unfortunately, go undiagnosed because of the large gap in training for primary care providers. The Eating Disorders Coalition is grateful to have bipartisan support from congressional leaders who share our passion for this critical piece of legislation.”

*The Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy & Action (EDC) is a federal advocacy organization based in Washington, DC. The EDC advances the recognition of eating disorders as a public health priority throughout the United States. Additional resources can be found at [eatingdisorderscoalition.org](http://eatingdisorderscoalition.org).*

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<sup>3</sup> Mahr F, Farahmand P, Bixler EO, Domen RE, Moser EM, Nadeem T, Levine RL, Halmi KA. A national survey of eating disorder training. *Int J Eat Disord.* 2015 May;48(4):443-5. doi: 10.1002/eat.22335. Epub 2014 Jul 22. PMID: 25047025.