

April 25, 2018

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education & Related Agencies
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education & Related Agencies
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray:

As organizations that care deeply about the health and well-being of our nation's children, we write to thank you for allocating \$10,000,000 in funding in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 Omnibus bill for the pediatric mental health care access grants that were authorized in the *21st Century Cures Act*. As you begin work on the FY 2019 appropriations process, we respectfully request that the FY 2019 Labor, HHS, Education (LHHS) appropriations bill include \$10,000,000 for this important initiative.

Research shows pervasive shortages of child and adolescent mental/behavioral health specialists throughout the US. To reduce this severe access barrier, integrating mental health and primary care has been shown to substantially expand access to mental health care, improve health and functional outcomes, increase satisfaction with care, and achieve cost savings. For children, integrating mental health into primary care settings simply makes sense. It is a setting where families regularly obtain care for their children and where identification, initial assessment, and treatment of medical and mental and behavioral health conditions can occur.

Funding for pediatric mental health care access grants will expand access to behavioral health services in pediatric primary care settings by supporting the development and maintenance of pediatric mental health care telehealth access programs. Behavioral health integration programs such as the Child Psychiatry Access Programs (CPAPs) operate in nearly 30 states and represent successful models for the integration of children's mental health into primary care. These programs support primary care providers in terms of continuing education, specialty mental health referral and behavioral health resource networking, social work co-location, and phone consultation.

Expanding the capacity of pediatric primary care providers to deliver behavioral health through mental and behavioral health consultation programs is one way to maximize a limited subspecialty workforce and to help ensure more children with emerging or diagnosed mental health disorders receive early and continuous treatment. The human and economic toll of inadequately addressing childhood mental health problems is significant. Untreated mental health disorders lead to higher rates of family dysfunction, poor school performance and drop-outs, juvenile incarceration, substance use, unemployment, and suicide. In 2015, more than 5,000 young people between the ages of 10 and 24 died by suicide, making it the second leading cause of death in this age group.

As you prepare the FY 19 LHHS appropriations bill, we respectfully request that you continue to fund this program at \$10,000,000. Thank you for your consideration. Our organizations are grateful to you for your commitment to the mental health and well-being of children.

Sincerely,

National Organizations

AIDS Alliance for Women, Infants, Children, Youth & Families
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Association for Geriatric Psychiatry
American Association for Psychoanalysis in Clinical Social Work
American Association of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry
American Association on Health and Disability
American Psychiatric Association
American Muslim Health Professionals
Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies
Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs
Campaign for Trauma-Informed Policy and Practice
Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
Children's Hospital Association
College of Psychiatric and Neurologic Pharmacists (CPNP)
Community Catalyst
Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance
Eating Disorders Coalition
Families USA
Family Voices
Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice
Lakeshore Foundation
Mental Health America
MomsRising
NAMI, National Alliance on Mental Illness
National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health
National Association for Children's Behavioral Health
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors
National Health Law Program
National Network of Child Psychiatry Access Programs
School-Based Health Alliance
Tricare for Kids Coalition
United Way Worldwide
ZERO TO THREE

State Organizations

Arizona

Infant Toddler Mental Health Coalition of Arizona

California

American Academy of Pediatrics, CA Chapter 3

Colorado

Colorado Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Society
AAP Colorado

Connecticut

Connecticut Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

Delaware

Delaware Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

Florida

Florida Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, Inc.

Idaho

Aim Early Idaho
Idaho Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

Illinois

Illinois Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Kansas

Kansas Appleseed
Children's Alliance of Kansas
Health Reform Resource Project

Kentucky

Children's Alliance of Kentucky

Massachusetts

Massachusetts Child Psychiatry Program

Minnesota

Minnesota Psychiatric Society
Minnesota Society of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

Missouri

Family Care Health Centers
Missouri Alliance for Children and Families
St. Louis Center for Family Development
Catholic Charities of St. Louis

New Hampshire

NH Children's Behavioral Health Collaborative

New Jersey

NJ Association of Mental Health and Addiction Agencies

New York

American Academy of Pediatrics New York State, Chapter 1

American Academy of Pediatrics New York State, Chapter 2

American Academy of Pediatrics New York State, Chapter 3

Oklahoma

Oklahoma Association for Infant Mental Health

Oregon

Oregon Pediatric Society

Rhode Island

Rhode Island KIDS COUNT

Tennessee

Tennessee Justice Center

Texas

Texas Pediatric Society

Vermont

Voices for Vermont's Children

Virginia

Voices for Virginia's Children

West Virginia

West Virginia Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

West Virginia Child Care Association

Wisconsin

Children's Hospital of Wisconsin

Wisconsin Child Psychiatry Consultation Program (CPCP)