

June 30, 2016

The Honorable Paul D. Ryan  
Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Democratic Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Speaker and Madam Leader:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we are writing to urge you to support H.R. 2646, the *Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act of 2015*, when it is taken up on the House floor for a vote.

We have a mental health crisis in this country. America's suicide rate is the highest it has been in 30 years. Every year, over 40,000 people die by suicide. Every day, millions of Americans go without the mental health services and supports they need. Families are struggling to find care for their loved ones and countless individuals are experiencing homelessness, incarceration and disability instead of lives of fulfillment and recovery.

Congress has worked across the aisle and in collaboration with the mental health community to find promising solutions to improve our nation's mental health care. As you are both aware, but the significance is noteworthy—H.R. 2646 passed unanimously out of the House Energy & Commerce Committee. Today, it represents the culmination of bipartisan work to forge a foundation for enhancing mental health services and supports.

H.R. 2646 helps address our severe workforce shortage, promotes integrated service delivery, early identification and intervention, and provides the full range of Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT) services to children receiving inpatient psychiatric hospital services in settings allowable under the Psych Under-21 benefit. In addition, the bill also supports suicide prevention and peer support services, clarifies and provides training regarding communications under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), affords liability protections for volunteer health professionals, strengthens crisis services and provides greater clarity on mental health parity.

The broad mental health community is pleased and gratified to support this bipartisan legislation. We now need your leadership to ensure that the hope that this important first step in mental health reform offers to millions of children, adults and older adults—and to the overall health of our nation—is realized at last.

Sincerely,

American Art Therapy Association  
American Association for Geriatric Psychiatry  
American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy  
American Psychiatric Association

American Psychological Association  
Anxiety and Depression Association of America  
Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare  
Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH)  
Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA)  
Eating Disorders Coalition  
The Jewish Federations of North America  
Mental Health America (MHA)  
NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals  
National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)  
National Alliance to End Homelessness  
National Association for Children's Behavioral Health  
National Association for Rural Mental Health  
National Association of Counties (NACo)  
National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems (NAPHS)  
National Council for Behavioral Health  
National Register of Health Service Psychologists  
Parity Implementation Coalition  
Sandy Hook Promise  
The National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health  
The Trevor Project  
Treatment Advocacy Center