



Eating Disorders Coalition Celebrates U.S. House of Representatives Passage of Eating Disorders Provisions Within FY 2022 Appropriations Bill

WASHINGTON, D.C. (July 30, 2021)- The Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy and Action (EDC) is pleased to announce the inclusion of three eating disorders measures in the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Related Agencies (LHHS) Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 Appropriations Bill that passed the U.S. House of Representatives yesterday. EDC would like to thank Representatives Ted Deutch (D-FL-22), Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA-01), Paul Tonko (D-NY-20) and Abigail Spanberger (D-VA-07) for leading these efforts.

Congress passed the 21st Century Cures Act (P.L. 114-255) with large bipartisan majorities in the House and Senate in December 2016. The bill placed a strong emphasis on improving the nation's broken mental health care system, including the serious mental illness of eating disorders. The eating disorders provisions included in the law, derived from the bipartisan Anna Westin Act of 2015 (H.R. 2515/S.1865), were designed to improve eating disorder early detection by health professionals, increase access to quality and affordable treatment for eating disorders under mental health parity, and provide the public with resources to help prevent and identify these conditions. The measures passed in the FY22 LHHS Appropriations bill will continue to aid in the enforcement of these provisions and to push the nation to recognize eating disorders as a public health priority.

COVID-19 worsened eating disorders across the nation, yet many patients remain undetected and untreated. The LHHS Appropriations bill will provide the Health Resource and Services Administration (HRSA) with \$1,000,000 for their Primary Care Training and Enhancement programs. The programs, in coordination with SAMHSA's National Center of Excellence for Eating Disorders (NCEED), will provide trainings for primary care health professionals to screen, briefly intervene, and refer patients to treatment for the severe mental illness of eating disorders.

"NCEED is thrilled to see recognition for the importance of eating disorders education and training for primary care providers (PCPs). This funding will allow NCEED to successfully launch our SAMHSA-funded initiative of Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment for Eating Disorders (SBIRT-ED)—a primary care-specific tool that allows PCPs to effectively detect and manage patients with eating disorders in their clinical practice," states Christine Peat, PhD, FAED, LP, Director of the National Center of Excellence for Eating Disorders. PCPs play a crucial role in the initial detection of eating disorders, but their needs have largely been left unmet. With the launch of SBIRT-ED, we will be able to equip PCPs with the tools necessary to better assist their patients and ultimately improve recovery for individuals with lived experience."

Additionally, the bill also included language to encourage the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to assist States in collecting data by including standard questions on unhealthy weight control practices for eating disorders, including binge eating disorders, through the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System and Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. The CDC

surveillance surveys provide critical data that informs public health interventions for at-risk populations and warrant inclusion of unhealthy weight control practices questions.

“I am so thankful to the Eating Disorders Coalition and the many advocates who have bravely shared both their painful struggles and their incredible accomplishments on the road to recovery. Without them, Congress would not have included these important measures to improve eating disorders awareness, treatment, and research that I am confident will save lives from eating disorders,” says Congressman Ted Deutch (D-FL-22). “I look forward to continuing to work with, and on behalf of, the over 30 million Americans who have experienced an eating disorder and their loved ones to build support for eating disorders funding among my colleagues in Congress.”

Last, one of the provisions will encourage the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to increase support for eating disorders research and encourage the NIH to establish a task force of eating disorders researchers, advocates, and Institutes and Centers to create a Strategic Plan to address research gaps in genetics, prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of eating disorders.

“Eating disorders affect Americans of every age, orientation, race, gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status, and when left untreated, can lead to other serious health conditions,” says Congressman Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA-01). “I am pleased to see the inclusion of these important eating disorder measures in the Labor Health and Human Services Appropriations bill and will continue to work with my colleagues to prioritize research for eating disorders.”

“The Eating Disorders Coalition is grateful for the inclusion of the \$1,000,000 funding for trainings, CDC’s assistance in data collection, and new research opportunities for eating disorders” states Chase Bannister, MDIV, MSW, LCSW, CEDS, President of the Eating Disorders Coalition. “This a momentous step towards early identification and access to treatment for individuals struggling with eating disorders. The EDC thanks the LHHS Committee and our Champions Representatives Deutch, Fitzpatrick, Tonko and Spanberger for including the requested language.”

The Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy & Action (EDC) is a Washington, DC-based, federal advocacy organization made up of advocacy organizations, academics, treatment providers, family/loved ones of children with eating disorders and people experiencing eating disorders nationwide. The EDC advances the recognition of eating disorders as a public health priority throughout the United States. Additional resources can also be found at eatingdisorderscoalition.org.

###

Media Contact: Emily Rosenberg: erosenberg@eatingdisorderscoalition.org