

Mental Health Liaison Group

October 2, 2015

The Honorable Amy Klobuchar
302 Hart Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kelly Ayotte
144 Russell Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
172 Russell Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
717 Hart Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Mental Health Liaison Group Support of Anna Westin Act of 2015 (S. 1865)

Dear Senators Klobuchar, Ayotte, Baldwin, and Capito:

On behalf of the Mental Health Liaison Group (MHLG), a national coalition of behavioral health advocacy organizations representing consumer, family members, advocates professionals and providers, we are writing to provide our support for the Anna Westin Act of 2015 (S. 1865).

Eating disorders affect at least 30 million Americans and have the highest mortality rate of all mental illnesses; at least 20% of people with eating disorders will die, with suicide being a leading cause of death. Due to a lack of early identification and intervention, as well as a lack of access to treatment, only 1 in 10 people with eating disorders will receive treatment. Additionally, notwithstanding clear congressional intent to include eating disorder and residential treatment coverage for all mental health disorders within the Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008 (“Mental Health Parity”), people with eating disorders are continually denied treatment due to perceived ambiguities in the law and a lack of enforcement.

This comprehensive legislation offers major advancements in our nation’s mental health system that will help individuals affected by eating disorders –from people with eating disorders, to treatment providers, to family members. S. 1865 improves care for those experiencing eating disorders by clarifying treatment coverage for residential treatment services under Mental Health Parity for all mental health disorders. The measure also provides for training programs to educate health professionals, school personnel, and the public on early identification of disorders such as anorexia, bulimia, and binge eating disorder.

More immediately, given the nature of the urgent crisis in the mental health system, the MHLG supports the Anna Westin Act of 2015.

Sincerely,

National organizations representing consumers, family members, advocates, professionals and providers
c/o Chuck Ingoglia, National Council for Behavioral Health at chucki@thenationalcouncil.org,
Laurel Stine, American Psychological Association at lstine@apa.org
and Debbie Plotnick, Mental Health America at dplotnick@mentalhealthamerica.org

Mental Health Liaison Group

American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

American Academy of Pediatrics

American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy

American Association on Health and Disability*

American Dance Therapy Association

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

American Group Psychotherapy Association

American Mental Health Counselors Association

American Occupational Therapy Association

American Orthopsychiatric Association

American Psychological Association

Anxiety and Depression Association of America

Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare

Center for Clinical Social Work

Clinical Social Work Association

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance

Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy & Action

Jewish Federations of North America

Mental Health America

National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health

National Association for Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Counselors, The Association for Addiction Professionals

National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders, Inc.

National Association of County Behavioral Health & Developmental Disability Directors

National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems

National Association of School Psychologists

National Association of State Directors of Special Education

National Association of Social Workers

National Coalition for Mental Health Recovery

National Council for Behavioral Health

National Disability Rights Network

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and Debbie Plotnick, Mental Health America at dplotnick@mentalhealthamerica.org

Mental Health Liaison Group

No Health Without Mental Health

Schizophrenia and Related Disorders Alliance of America

School Social Work Association of America

Tourette Association of America

The Trevor Project

**MHLG Observer*

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The Honorable Ted Deutch
2447 Rayburn House Office Building
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Ileana Ros-Lehtinen
2206 Rayburn House Office Building
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Mental Health Liaison Group Support of Anna Westin Act of 2015 (HR 2515)

Dear Congressman Deutch and Ros-Lehtinen:

On behalf of the Mental Health Liaison Group (MHLG), a national coalition of behavioral health advocacy organizations representing consumer, family members, advocates professionals and providers, we are writing to provide our support for the Anna Westin Act of 2015 (HR 2515).

Eating disorders affect at least 30 million Americans and have the highest mortality rate of all mental illnesses; at least 20% of people experiencing eating disorders will die, with suicide being a leading cause of death. Due to a lack of early identification and intervention, as well as a lack of access to treatment, only 1 in 10 people with eating disorders will receive treatment. Additionally, notwithstanding clear congressional intent to include eating disorder and residential treatment coverage for all mental health disorders within the Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008 (“Mental Health Parity”), people with eating disorders are continually denied treatment due to perceived ambiguities in the law and a lack of enforcement.

This comprehensive legislation offers major advancements in our nation’s mental health system that will help individuals affected by eating disorders –from people with eating disorders, to treatment providers, to family members. H.R. 2515 improves care for those experiencing eating disorders by clarifying treatment coverage for residential treatment services under Mental Health Parity for all mental health disorders. The measure also provides for training programs to educate health professionals, school personnel, and the public on early identification of disorders such as anorexia, bulimia, and binge eating disorder. In addition, the legislation incorporates the Truth in Advertising Act, requiring the FTC to study the extent to which digitally altered body and facial images of people in advertising may contribute to eating disorders in children and young adults.

More immediately, given the nature of the urgent crisis in the mental health system, the MHLG supports the Anna Westin Act of 2015.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

American Academy of Pediatrics

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