

# Mental Health Liaison Group

July 16, 2015

The Honorable Patty Murray  
United States Senate  
154 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Murray:

The undersigned organizations are pleased to write in full support of the Children's Recovery from Trauma Act of 2015 (S. 1494). This important legislation would authorize and make improvements to the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN), a successful longstanding congressionally-launched initiative. Over the last 15 years, this outstanding initiative has improved the lives of hundreds of thousands of children and families who have experienced trauma, and is a critically important national resource for all child-serving systems.

Child traumatic stress is a serious public health problem that affects millions of children and costs our country billions of dollars each year. Decades of research, including the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study, provide substantial evidence for the lifelong health consequences of trauma and the importance of investing in programs to address it. Administered by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), NCTSN was established by the U.S. Congress in 2000 to address the issue of child trauma by establishing a collaborative network of what is now 79 funded (and 120 affiliate) university, hospital, tribal, and diverse community-based organizations, with thousands of national and local partners, whose mission is to raise the standard of care and improve access to services for traumatized children, their families, and communities throughout the United States. Over the last decade, the dedicated professionals and partners working as part of the NCTSN have brought about widespread and lasting improvement in the lives of traumatized children and their families in this country. Scientific information is getting to front-line providers faster, evidence-based resources, treatment, and trainings are being disseminated, and children are getting better. This initiative is working.

This legislation would establish in statute that the NCTSN should continue with its original mission as envisioned by Congress, one that supports collaboration of researchers and providers to expedite science to service, and to deliver the highest quality care promptly to children and families who experience traumatic events. As state, local, and federal budget cuts continue to limit availability of local community mental health and child services, it is essential to continue our investment in this national program that is providing high quality trauma-informed services, treatment, and training to states and communities all across the nation. Thus, in addition to passing this important legislation authorizing NCTSN at \$50 million for fiscal years 2016 through 2020, we urge Congress to fully fund the program at this level. This national and local resource is critically needed at this time, and we strongly urge you to continue to provide full support to this initiative in the coming years.

National organizations representing consumers, family members, advocates, professionals and providers  
c/o Laurel Stine, J.D., American Psychological Association at [lstine@apa.org](mailto:lstine@apa.org)  
and Debbie Plotnick, MSS, MLSP, Mental Health America at [dplotnick@mentalhealthamerica.net](mailto:dplotnick@mentalhealthamerica.net)

Our organizations are grateful to you and your colleagues for Congress' strong bipartisan commitment to the NCTSN over the past 15 years. You and your staff have worked tirelessly to provide support for this important program that is transforming the lives of children and families across the country. We welcome the opportunity to work with you to ensure this vital program continues.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Pediatrics  
American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy  
American Association of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry  
American Association of Pastoral Counselors  
American Association on Health and Disability \*  
American Counseling Association  
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 Psychiatric Association  
American Psychological Association  
Anxiety and Depression Association of America  
Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare  
Clinical Social Work Association  
Clinical Social Work Guild  
Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance  
Eating Disorders Coalition  
First Focus Campaign for Children  
Mental Health America  
National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health  
National Association for Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Counselors  
National Association for Children's Behavioral Health  
National Association for Rural Mental Health  
National Association of County Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability Directors  
National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems  
National Association of School Psychologists  
National Association of Social Workers  
National Association of State Directors of Special Education  
National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors  
National Council for Behavioral Health  
National Disability Rights Network  
No Health Without Mental Health  
Schizophrenia and Related Disorders Alliance of America  
School Social Work Association of America  
The Trevor Project  
Treatment Communities of America

\*MHLG observer