

June 6, 2019

The Honorable Katie Porter
U.S. House of Representatives
1117 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Gus Bilirakis
U.S. House of Representatives
2227 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representatives Porter and Bilirakis,

Mental Health Liaison Group, representing consumers, families, providers, and organizations advocating to strengthen access to high-quality mental and behavioral health care, strongly support the Mental Health Parity Compliance Act of 2019. Your bipartisan leadership on this issue is critical for individuals living with mental illnesses and substance use disorders.

The Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act (Federal parity law), which passed more than ten years ago was designed to make insurance coverage for mental health and substance use disorder treatment no more restrictive than insurance coverage for any other medical condition. Unfortunately, more than a decade after the law was enacted, health plans and insurers generally are not yet meeting the requirements of the law that govern how they design and apply their managed care practices for mental health and substance use services.

Your legislation fosters transparency and accountability, to ensure that health plans complying with the Federal parity law and that those confronting mental illness have equal access and coverage of needed mental health and behavioral health services. For far too long, individuals and their families have endured barriers to mental health and substance use disorder treatment that are likely more restrictive than those in place for other medical care. It is incredibly difficult for those confronting mental illness and their families to know if plans are complying with the law, given its complexity and the inherent challenge in trying to compare how mental health and substance use disorder coverage matches up with other medical coverage. Therefore, the legislation provides a needed process that requires transparency and accountability in how plans design coverage for mental health and substance use services and if that coverage is in accordance with federal law.

We have seen a dramatic rise in deaths resulting from the opioid epidemic and suicide crisis. This legislation will help ensure that patients have equal access and coverage to mental health and substance use services, as required under current law.

The Mental Health Liaison Group thanks you again for your bipartisan commitment to achieving complete implementation of the Federal Parity Law and pledges our support to help you move this legislation through Congress.

Sincerely,

American Art Therapy Association

American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy

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 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 Psychiatric Association

American Psychiatric Nurses Association

American Psychoanalytic Association

American Psychological Association

American Society of Addiction Medicine

Anxiety and Depression Association of America

Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Health

Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law

Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

Clinical Social Work Association

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance

Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy and Action

Education Development Center

EMDR International Association

Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice

International OCD Foundation

The Jewish Federations of North America

Legal Action Center
Mental Health America
NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals
National Alliance on Mental Illness
National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health
National Association for Behavioral Healthcare
National Assn of County Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability Directors
National Association of School Psychologists
National Association of Social Workers
National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors
National Council for Behavioral Health
National Eating Disorders Association (NEDA)
National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health
National League for Nursing
National Association for Rural Mental Health
National Register of Health Service Psychologists
NHMH - No Health without Mental Health
The Psychotherapy Action Network
Residential Eating Disorders Consortium
Sandy Hook Promise
SARDAA Schizophrenic and Related Disorders Alliance of America
School-Based Health Alliance
SMART Recovery
The Trevor Project
Tourette Association of America
Treatment Communities of America
Trinity Health
Trust for America's Health