

# Mental Health Liaison Group

August 6, 2015

The Honorable Lamar Alexander  
Chairman  
Health, Education, Labor, and  
Pensions Committee  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Ranking Member  
Health, Education, Labor, and  
Pensions Committee  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Alexander and Murray:

The Mental Health Liaison Group (MHLG)- a coalition of national organizations representing consumers/patients, family members, advocates, professionals and providers- is writing to express our support for S. 1893, the Mental Health Awareness and Improvement Act of 2015.

We applaud your bipartisan leadership on legislation reauthorizing and improving programs aimed at increasing awareness, prevention, and early identification of mental health conditions, and promoting linkages to evidence-based treatments and services for children and youth. Among the important provisions included for reauthorization is the Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act, one of the foundational programs underpinning our national suicide prevention strategy. S. 1893 also reauthorizes the National Child Traumatic Stress Initiative, which addresses childhood trauma in environments as varied as gun violence and natural disasters, and is a critically important national resource for all child-serving systems.

The Mental Health Awareness and Improvement Act of 2015 also fosters early detection of widely prevalent mental disorders by key segments of the community, including teachers and emergency personnel. Finally, we commend you for calling for an investigation and analysis of federal requirements that act as barriers to the greater integration of mental and behavioral health care with primary care, for making improvements to our nation's awareness and understanding of treatment approaches to opioid use disorders, and for the other notable provisions of S. 1893.

Congratulations to both of you for your bipartisanship on these important mental health issues. We look forward to continuing to work with you to enact this legislation and to advance related mental health reform efforts through the Senate.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry  
American Academy of Pediatrics  
American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy

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)

American Association on Health and Disability \*  
American Dance Therapy Association  
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention  
American Group Psychotherapy Association  
American Hospital Association  
American Mental Health Counselors Association  
American Nurses Association  
American Occupational Therapy Association  
American Orthopsychiatric Association  
American Psychiatric Association  
American Psychiatric Nurses Association  
American Psychological Association  
Anxiety and Depression Association of America  
Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare  
Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness  
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law  
Clinical Social Work Association  
Clinical Social Work Guild  
Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance  
Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy & Action  
First Focus Campaign for Children  
Learning Disabilities Association of America  
Mental Health America  
National Alliance on Mental Illness  
National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health  
National Association for Children's Behavioral Health  
National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems  
National Association of School Psychologists  
National Association of Social Workers  
National Association of State Directors Alcohol & Drug Abuse Directors  
National Association of State Directors of Special Education  
National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors  
National Council for Behavioral Health  
NHMH-No Health without Mental Health  
School Social Work Association of America  
Tourette Association of America  
ZERO TO THREE

\*MHLG Observer Group