

October 9, 2024

The Honorable Jamie Raskin
U.S. House of Representatives
2242 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Don Bacon
U.S. House of Representatives
2104 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Raskin and Representative Bacon:

The Mental Health Liaison Group (MHLG), a coalition of national organizations representing consumers, family members, mental health and addiction providers, advocates and other stakeholders committed to strengthening Americans' access to mental health and addiction care, is writing to express our strong support for the bipartisan *Stabilization to Prevent (STOP) Suicide Act* (H.R.9577). This legislation will create a grant program at the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to expand the use of evidence-based models for stabilizing individuals with serious thoughts of suicide, allowing more providers to deliver outpatient or virtual stabilization services while relieving pressure on emergency departments and law enforcement.

Suicide is an urgent public health issue, with recent data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) showing that in 2022, more than 49,000 lives were lost to suicide in the United States, 13.2 million people reported seriously considering suicide, and 1.6 million people attempted suicide.^{1,2} Suicide is the 11th leading cause of death in the U.S., and the second leading cause of death for people ages 10-14 and 25-34.³ For every suicide death in 2022, it is estimated that there were 11 emergency department visits for self-harm,⁴ 52 self-reported suicide attempts in the past year, and 336 people who seriously considered suicide in the past year.^{5,6}

Research has found that if someone can persist through the intense, typically short-lived, moment of active suicidal crisis, chances are they will not die by suicide.⁷ However, individuals in crisis may not have access to evidence-based support in their communities where they can be seen outside of a hospital setting. Instead, individuals experiencing a suicidal crisis may seek

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. National Vital Statistics System, Mortality 2018-2022 on CDC WONDER Online Database, released in 2024. Data are from the Multiple Cause of Death Files, 2018-2022, as compiled from data provided by the 57 vital statistics jurisdictions through the Vital Statistics Cooperative Program. Accessed at <http://wonder.cdc.gov/mcd-icd10-expanded.html> on Aug 19, 2024.

² Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2023). Key substance use and mental health indicators in the United States: Results from the 2022 National Survey on Drug Use and Health Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/reports/rpt42731/2022-nsduh-nnr.pdf>

³ National Vital Statistics System, Mortality 2018-2022.

⁴ CDC WISQARS (2022).

⁵ CDC National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), National Vital Statistics System, Mortality 2018-2022 on CDC WONDER Online Database CDC WONDER.

⁶ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2023). Key substance use and mental health indicators in the United States: Results from the 2022 National Survey on Drug Use and Health Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/reports/rpt42731/2022-nsduh-nnr.pdf>.

⁷ American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, What we've learned through research. Accessed at <https://afsp.org/what-we-ve-learned-through-research/#top-10-things-we-ve-learned-from-research> on August 19, 2024.

care at the emergency room or receive a response from law enforcement. Studies show that roughly 8-12% of all adult emergency department patients experience suicidal thoughts.^{8,9}

The *STOP Suicide Act* will help more people access immediate suicide-specific interventions in their communities while connecting them with critical follow up care and other supports to manage suicide risk. Entities that are eligible to receive grants under the bill include community health centers, Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHCs), rural health centers, primary care and behavioral health providers, federally qualified health centers, children's hospitals, school-based or campus-based health centers, and state public health agencies.

We thank you for your leadership in introducing the *STOP Suicide Act*, and we look forward to working with you and your staff to pass this important legislation.

Sincerely,

American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy
American Association for Psychoanalysis in Clinical Social Work
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
American Mental Health Counselors Association
American Psychiatric Association
American Psychological Association Services
Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare
Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness
Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
Children's Hospital Association
Clinical Social Work Association
Crisis Residential Association
Crisis Text Line
Employees Assistance Professionals Association (EAPA)
Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice
Huntington's Disease Society of America
Inseparable
International Society of Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurses
The Kennedy Forum
Maternal Mental Health Leadership Alliance
Mental Health America
National Alliance on Mental Illness
The National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health
National Association for Rural Mental Health (NARMH)
National Association of County Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability Directors (NACBHDD)
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Association of School Psychologists
National Association of Social Workers
National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors

⁸ Ilgen MA, Walton MA, Cunningham RM, et al. Recent suicidal ideation among patients in an inner city emergency department. (2009). *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior*, 39(5), 508-517. DOI: 10.1521/suli.2009.39.5.508.

⁹ Claassen C.A. & Larkin G.L. (2005). Occult suicidality in an emergency department population. *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 186(4), 352-353. DOI: 10.1192/bjp.186.4.352.

National Council for Mental Wellbeing
National League for Nursing
NHMH - No Health Without Mental Health
Policy Center for Maternal Mental Health
Psychotherapy Action Network
School Social Work Association of America
The Trevor Project
Trust for America's Health
Vibrant Emotional Health