

The Honorable Lindsey Graham
U.S. Senate
211 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jeff Merkley
U.S. Senate
531 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jodey Arrington
U.S. House of Representatives
204 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Brendan Boyle
U.S. House of Representatives
507 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

January 29, 2025

Re: Protect Medicaid for People with Mental Health Conditions and Substance Use Disorders

Dear Chairman Graham, Chairman Arrington, Ranking Member Merkley, and Ranking Member Boyle:

The Mental Health Liaison Group (MHLG), a coalition of national organizations representing people with mental health conditions and substance use disorders, family members, mental health and addiction providers, advocates and other stakeholders, is committed to strengthening Americans' access to mental health and substance use disorder care. We are writing to urge Congress to protect Medicaid, including in any reconciliation efforts. Cutting Medicaid funding or benefits, as well as imposing burdensome work requirements, would disproportionately harm people with mental health (MH) conditions and substance use disorders (SUD), who make up approximately [40%](#) of nonelderly adults on Medicaid. In the midst of our nation's ongoing mental health crisis, including its devastating impact on youth, and our ongoing overdose epidemic, we cannot reduce access to community- and school-based life-saving services.

Our organizations are deeply concerned by policy proposals under consideration that would change Medicaid's financing structure, shift costs to the states, reduce eligibility or benefits, or impose additional barriers to coverage and enrollment. Any of these policy changes or cuts would take away quality, affordable MH/SUD care from approximately 80 million Americans who rely on Medicaid, including low-income children, pregnant women, people with disabilities, and seniors. However, the need for MH/SUD services would not go away. Many people would be forced to forgo community-based and routine MH/SUD care, such as medications for opioid use disorder (MOUD), therapy, and prescription MH medications. This would lead to people's conditions worsening until they require more costly and more intensive treatment at a point of crisis. Moreover, limiting access to Medicaid threatens to undermine gains in reducing overdose mortality rates, and could lead to increasing rates of incarceration and hospitalization.

Medicaid is the [single largest payer](#) of MH and SUD services, and we fear the devastating consequences to our nation if the federal Medicaid program were to be weakened. All people, regardless of their economic circumstances, deserve access to evidence-based MH and SUD care, and we all pay a high cost when that care is unattainable. We strongly urge you to reject any cuts to the Medicaid program. If you have any questions or would like to discuss this issue, please do not hesitate to contact Hannah Wesolowski, Chief Advocacy Officer at the National Alliance on Mental Illness (hwesolowski@nami.org), or Deborah Steinberg, Senior Health Policy Attorney at the Legal Action Center (dsteinberg@lac.org).

Sincerely,

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)
Legal Action Center
American Academy of Nursing
American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy
American Association for Psychoanalysis in Clinical Social Work
American Association of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
American Association of Psychiatric Pharmacists
American Association on Health and Disability
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
American Psychiatric Association
American Psychiatric Nurses Association
American Psychological Association Services
American Society of Addiction Medicine
Anxiety and Depression Association of America
Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
Clinical Social Work Association
Crisis Text Line
Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance
Epilepsy Foundation of America
Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice
Huntington's Disease Society of America
Inseparable
International OCD Foundation
International Society of Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurses
Maternal Mental Health Leadership Alliance
Mental Health America
NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals
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
National Council for Mental Wellbeing
National Federation of Families
National Health Law Program
National League for Nursing
National Register of Health Service Psychologists
National Women's Shelter Network, Inc.
Network of Jewish Human Service Agencies
Postpartum Support International
Psychotherapy Action Network
School Social Work Association of America
SMART Recovery
The Kennedy Forum

The National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health/Got Transition
UnidosUS
Vibrant Emotional Health
Western Youth Services
Youth Villages

Cc: House and Senate Leadership; Chairs and Ranking Members of E&C and Finance