

June 14, 2016

The Honorable Fred Upton
Chairman, Energy and Commerce Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Ranking Member, Energy and Commerce Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Upton and Ranking Member Pallone,

On behalf of the more than 800 member organizations of the National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems (NAPHS), we want to extend our support for the bipartisan substitute amendment to the *Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act*, H.R.2646.

The National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems (NAPHS) thanks both of you for your leadership in putting a spotlight on the mental health crisis. We thank you for your leadership in answering the call and the other cosponsors for their support, and especially Congressman Murphy, for demonstrating that achieving overall health of mind and body is a bipartisan goal.

The *Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act* provides specific solutions to some of the most challenging issues we face. Your solutions in the legislation would be the first change in Medicaid policy (the "Institutions for Mental Disease" exclusion) since 1972 by codifying in this legislation changes included in a recent Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) final rule on Medicaid managed care. Codifying the rule will ensure that managed care organizations (MCOs) will be able to contract with Institutions for Mental Disease (IMDs). Currently, adult Medicaid beneficiaries ages 21-64 are otherwise prohibited by law from accessing short-term, acute care in psychiatric hospitals.

The bill would also create an Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use. This provision would help to elevate mental health and substance use public policy and emphasize the importance of treatment for serious behavioral health disorders.

In addition, the bill calls for health plans to be more transparent in how they are conforming to the requirements of the federal parity law (the *Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act*).

Additional provisions address suicide prevention, workforce development, and privacy.

We appreciate all the efforts of the many committee members who were actively engaged in the discussions that have brought us to this important day for those living with mental illness and substance use disorders. We look forward to continuing to work with the Committee, the full House and Senate, as well as the Administration to make mental health reform a reality this year.

Sincerely,



Mark Covall
President and CEO