

The Honorable Chris Stewart
2242 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Doris Matsui
2311 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representatives Stewart and Matsui,

The Mental Health Liaison Group (MHLG), a coalition of national organizations that represents consumers, family members, mental health and addiction providers' advocates and other stakeholders want to thank you for introducing the Suicide Prevention Act of 2019 (H.R.5619). This piece of legislation will help to identify and track suicide attempts and instances of self-harm in emergency departments and improve follow up care. MHLG expresses strong support for legislation.

Suicide is a public health crisis and is the 10th leading cause of death in the United States. In 2018, we lost 48,344 Americans to suicide. Moreover, 39% of individuals who die by suicide visited an emergency department a year prior to their death. This bill will help save lives and reduce the suicide rate.

This bipartisan and bicameral bill would authorize funding for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to partner with state and local health departments to improve the surveillance of suicide attempts and other instances of self-harm. Currently, there is no complete data source for suicide attempts in the United States; this bill would enhance data collection for state and local health departments and community organizations to recognize suicide trends, intervene earlier, and save lives.

The legislation will also establish a grant program within the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to fund suicide prevention programs in hospital emergency departments to provide a better training program for staff to implement suicide prevention strategies, screen at-risk patients, and refer patients to appropriate follow-up care.

There is a great need to enhance the data collection of suicide attempts and self-harm, and to increase training and screening in emergency departments. The MHLG thanks you for introducing legislation that will help to reduce the suicide rate and save lives.

Sincerely,

2020 Mom

American Art Therapy Association
American Association for Psychoanalysis in Clinical Social Work
American Association of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry
American Association of Suicidology
American Dance Therapy Association
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
American Group Psychotherapy Association
American Mental Health Counselors Association (AMHCA)
American Psychiatric Association
American Psychological Association
Anxiety and Depression Association of America
Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare
Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness
Children and Adult with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
Clinical Social Work Association

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance
Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy & Action
Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice
The Kennedy Forum
Mental Health America
National Alliance on Mental Illness
The National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health
National Association for Children's Behavioral Health
National Association for Behavioral Healthcare
National Association of Social Workers
National Association of Social Workers – Texas Chapter
National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors
National Board for Certified Counselors
National Council for Behavioral Health
National Eating Disorders Association
National League for Nursing
No Health without Mental Health
Postpartum Support International
Residential Eating Disorder Consortium
Sandy Hook Promise
Schizophrenia and Related Disorders Alliance of America
SMART Recovery
The Trevor Project
Treatment Communities of America