

August 9, 2010

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable John Boehner  
Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

**RE: FMAP Extension Protects Mental Health Services and Jobs**

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leader Boehner:

The undersigned organizations are writing you to express our support for swift action on the Senate-passed version of H.R. 1586. The extension of federal assistance for state Medicaid programs that is included in the legislation will provide desperately needed funding to help states weather the recession and prevent cuts to mental health services for our nation's most vulnerable individuals and families.

The Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) increase that was enacted under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 has helped stabilize states' economies during the recession by providing financial assistance with growing Medicaid enrollment at a time when state revenues are declining. However, this assistance is set to end on Dec. 31, 2010, leaving states with fewer resources as they struggle to continue to provide Medicaid services to individuals in need.

Since the beginning of the recession, there have been \$1.8 billion in cuts to addictions and mental health services nationwide, according to a recent report by the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors. Without an extension of the FMAP increase, states face even more drastic cuts that could result in fewer services for vulnerable populations, drops in provider payment or even the closure of treatment centers. Moreover, the actions states will have to take to close their budget gaps could cost the economy 900,000 jobs, according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.

Although we are disappointed that a portion of the cost of the FMAP extension is offset with an early end to enhanced food stamp benefits in 2014, we strongly believe that without urgent action on FMAP, millions of our country's most vulnerable residents will be unable to access the vital mental health and addictions treatment services they need. Extending the FMAP increase is the right thing to do for individuals with mental illness and for the behavioral health providers and organizations that serve them. We look forward to working with you in the future to mitigate the effect of the early end to enhanced food stamp benefits and to protect families' access to this important program.

Thank you for your attention to this critically important matter.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Children and Families  
American Counseling Association  
American Nurses Association  
Anxiety Disorders Association of America  
Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare  
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law  
Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance

The Jewish Federations of North America  
Mental Health America  
National Alliance on Mental Illness  
National Association for Children's Behavioral Health  
National Association of County Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability Directors  
National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems  
National Association for Rural Mental Health  
National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors  
National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare  
National Disability Rights Network  
Therapeutic Communities of America  
United Neighborhood Centers of America