



AMERICAN  
PSYCHOLOGICAL  
ASSOCIATION

October 3, 2007

The Honorable Jack Reed  
The Honorable Gordon Smith  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Reed and Senator Smith:

On behalf of the 148,000 members and affiliates of the American Psychological Association (APA), I am writing to express our support for the Community Mental Health Services Improvement Act.

APA is the largest scientific and professional organization representing psychology in the United States and is the world's largest association of psychologists. APA's membership includes researchers, educators, clinicians, consultants, and students. Through its 53 subfields of psychology and affiliations with 59 state, territorial, and Canadian provincial associations, APA works to advance psychology as a science, as a profession and as a means of promoting health, education, and human welfare.

This important legislation makes a significant contribution to two areas of critical and documented national need: increasing the number of skilled professionals available to provide high quality mental and behavioral health care and improving the health status of people with mental disorders.

As you know, the President's New Freedom Commission Report referred to a "workforce crisis" in the mental health and substance abuse field, and we applaud your leadership in addressing this issue with personnel preparation initiatives. Both the new university-based training programs, as well as additional student loan assistance initiatives, will help individuals and communities throughout the nation -- especially those most in need -- by supporting community mental health programs operating in health professional shortage areas. APA strongly believes that both the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) should work together to develop a coordinated response to the documented shortage of trained mental health care professionals in both urban and rural areas.

APA is also pleased with the inclusion of provisions that would co-locate primary care, specialty medical care, and substance abuse services in community mental health centers

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in coordination with other behavioral health providers across the United States. These agencies do not currently possess the resources to integrate mental health and primary care services at a single community site, and the appalling death rates among public sector mental health consumers strongly suggest that the referral model is not working well. Moreover, integrating primary care into behavioral health service settings is a key policy objective of the mental health community, and the two co-located programs you seek to authorize are a first step in a larger effort to reduce mortality and morbidity among individuals living with mental disorders.

Thank you for your outstanding advocacy and leadership. We have enjoyed working with you in the past and look forward to working closely with you as the reauthorization process for both HRSA and SAMHSA moves forward. If you would like additional information or assistance, please contact Jenny Smulson in APA's Education Government Relations Office at [jmulson@apa.org](mailto:jmulson@apa.org) or 202.336.5945.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'NBA', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Norman B. Anderson, Ph.D.  
Chief Executive Officer