

July 22, 2008

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
528 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
361A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Reid and McConnell,

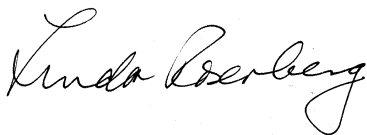
On behalf of the National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare – an organization representing 1,400 Community Mental Health Centers and other community mental health and substance abuse agencies across the country – I am writing to offer our strong support for the Advancing America's Priorities Act. In particular, the National Council applauds the inclusion of the Melanie Blocker Stokes MOTHERS Act (S 1375) and the Mentally Ill Offender Treatment and Crime Reduction Reauthorization and Improvement Act (S 2304/HR 3992). Both bills address key mental health and addiction treatment and service needs across the country.

The Melanie Blocker Stokes MOTHERS Act (S 1375) would benefit millions of women and families across the country that are or have been affected by postpartum depression. The mental health and substance abuse provider organization members of the National Council serve over 6 million low-income children and adults with mental illness and addiction disorders across the country, and know firsthand the potentially devastating impact of untreated postpartum depression. The National Council is pleased that S 1375 will fund education and outreach activities to help providers identify women suffering from postpartum depression, and also creates new grant funding to help assure access to needed care.

The Mentally Ill Offender Treatment and Crime Reduction Reauthorization and Improvement Act (S 2304/HR 3992) is designed to facilitate collaboration among the criminal justice, juvenile justice, mental health and addiction treatment systems and to improve access to effective treatment for people with mental illnesses, including co-occurring substance use disorders, involved with the justice system. In the two years that it has been funded, 53 planning and implementation grants have been provided to state, local and tribal governments throughout the U.S. through MIOTCRA. These programs are making a significant difference in communities across the country.

Thank you for your leadership on these important issues. We look forward to working with you as you work to advance this legislation in the 110th Congress.

Sincerely,



Linda Rosenberg, MSW, CSW
President and CEO

