

# Mental Health Liaison Group

February 11, 2007

The Honorable Gene Green  
2335 Rayburn House Office Bldg.  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tim Murphy  
322 Cannon House Office Bldg.  
Washington DC 20515

Dear Representative Green and Representative Murphy:

The undersigned organizations are writing to express strong support for the Community Mental Health Services Improvement Act (H.R. 5176). The provisions of this bill will have far-reaching implications for the health and well being of people living with mental illness and addictions.

This legislation is vital to the health and well being of people with mental illness, as evidenced in a 2006 report developed by the Medical Directors Council of the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors (NASMHPD). Their report found that people with mental illnesses seem to have the shortest life expectancy, and the highest levels of disability, among any other subgroup in all of American public health. For this reason, we are particularly pleased with the inclusion of provisions that would co-locate primary care, specialty medical care and substance use treatment services in Community Mental Health Organizations throughout the United States.

Since the President's New Freedom Commission Report referred to a "workforce crisis" in the mental health and substance abuse field, we also support the personnel preparation initiatives contained in this bill. Both the new university-based training programs as well as additional student loan assistance will help community mental health programs operating in health professional shortage areas. In addition, the new tele-mental health and health information technology programs contained in your legislation will help address the twin goals of improving the quality of care and expanding access to behavioral health services in rural areas.

Thank you for your advocacy and leadership on behalf of people with mental illness and addictions. We look forward to working with you to enact this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Children and Families  
American Academy of Child Adolescent Psychiatry  
American Association for Geriatric Psychiatry  
American Association of Pastoral Counselors  
American Counseling Association  
American Group Psychotherapy Association  
American Mental Health Counselors Association  
American Psychiatric Association

National organizations representing consumers, family members, advocates, professionals and providers

American Psychoanalytic Association  
American Psychological Association  
American Psychotherapy Association  
Anxiety Disorders Association of America  
Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare  
Association for the Advancement of Psychology  
Association of Jewish Family & Children's Agencies  
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law  
Center for Clinical Social Work  
Child Welfare League of America  
Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder  
Clinical Social Work Association  
Clinical Social Work Guild  
Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance  
Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy & Action  
Mental Health America  
National Alliance to End Homelessness  
National Association for Children's Behavioral Health  
National Association for Rural Mental Health  
National Association of County Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability Directors  
National Association of Mental Health Planning & Advisory Councils  
National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems  
National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors  
National Coalition of Mental Health Consumer/Survivor Organizations  
National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare  
National Disability Rights Network  
Suicide Prevention Action Network USA  
Therapeutic Communities of America  
Tourette Syndrome Association  
United Jewish Communities  
Witness Justice