

September 14, 2009

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

On behalf of the National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare – representing 1,600 Community Mental Health Centers (CMHCs) and other community-based mental health and addiction providers – I am writing to express our strong support for your efforts to reform America’s health care system. Our members serve over 6 million low-income children and adults with mental health and addiction disorders. Fully 25% of public mental health consumers that we serve are uninsured.

According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, one in five Americans below 200% of poverty have mental disorders including serious mental illnesses like schizophrenia, autism and major clinical depression. In turn, the National Council estimates that coverage expansions will add 2.8 million low income persons to the public mental health system and increase the patient/consumer average caseload of CMHCs by 50% upon full implementation in 2013.

Providing stable, affordable coverage to this population is vitally important for the health and welfare of these individuals, their families, communities and our nation. Your leadership and vision for reform are to be commended.

In conclusion, the National Council pledges to fight side-by-side with you to ensure congressional passage of healthcare reform legislation this year.

Sincerely,



Linda Rosenberg, MSW
President & CEO