

October 23, 2009

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow  
SH-133 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

**RE: The Nation's CMHCs Support the Bipartisan ENHANCED Act**

Dear Senator Stabenow:

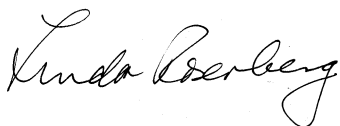
You are continuing your outstanding leadership in federal mental health and addiction policy by recently introducing the "Establishing a Network of Health-Advancing National Centers of Excellence for Depression Act of 2009", or the ENHANCED Act. On behalf of the National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare – representing 1,700 Community Mental Health Centers (CMHCs) and other community-based mental health and addiction providers serving low income persons with behavioral health conditions, I am writing to express our strong support of this critically important piece of legislation.

Of the 6 million children and adults that our members serve every year, individuals with mood disorders – encompassing major clinical depression and bipolar disorder – constitute the largest single segment of our patient caseload. Further, these consumers experience a high incidence of co-occurring chronic diseases including cancer, heart disease and HIV/AIDS. As a result, this patient population typically presents with a complicated array of interrelated clinical issues. CMHCs are in constant search for the latest interdisciplinary evidenced-based interventions to meet their complex health care needs.

The ENHANCED Act is ground breaking because it focuses on applied research outcomes. Not only does the legislation establish a national network of centers of academic excellence for the treatment of depressive and bipolar disorders, it also insists upon partnerships with CMHCs and other community mental health resources. Through such collaborations, the measure envisions taking transitional research out of the ivory tower and applying it in community treatment settings where the clinical need is greatest.

Senator Stabenow, the National Council will stand shoulder to shoulder with you to seek both passage of the ENHANCED Act in the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress as well as federal appropriations for this critically important measure.

Sincerely,



Linda Rosenberg, MSW  
President and CEO