

# EXPAND EXCELLENCE IN MENTAL HEALTH ACT (S. 2525/ H.R. 4567)

## EXPANDING ACCESS TO **COMPREHENSIVE MENTAL HEALTH, SUBSTANCE USE SERVICES**



### **REQUEST**

**SUPPORT FUNDING FOR THE EXPAND EXCELLENCE IN MENTAL HEALTH ACT OUTLINED [HERE](#).**

The Excellence in Mental Health Act demonstration—created as part of the Protecting Access to Medicare Act of 2014—is a two-year, 8-state initiative to expand Americans’ access to community-based mental health and addiction care. It lays the foundation for a transformation of our delivery system by setting standards for Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHCs) and establishing a Medicaid payment rate that supports the costs of their comprehensive service array.

**CCBHCS AREN'T JUST BUSINESS AS USUAL BY A DIFFERENT NAME.** Certified clinics must provide evidence-based outpatient mental health and substance use services, 24-hour crisis care, primary care screening and monitoring, psychiatric rehabilitation services, and care coordination across health care settings. They must work with law enforcement officers, criminal justice systems, veterans’ organizations, child welfare agencies, schools, and others to ensure no one falls through the cracks. Through outcome monitoring and quality bonus payments, clinics will be held accountable for patients’ progress. CCBHCs will be supported by a sustainable Medicaid payment rate that—unlike current grant funding and dimly low reimbursement rates—supports their actual costs of expanding evidence-based services, engaging patients outside the four walls of the clinic, and leveraging technology for improved outcomes.

**IN SHORT, CCBHCS WILL TRANSFORM OUR OVERBURDENED, UNDERFUNDED DELIVERY SYSTEM.** Twenty-four states are currently planning the reforms that will allow them to certify, pay, and monitor CCBHCs. Yet, the law’s 8-state limit means that two-thirds of the planning states will have to stop in their tracks. Every state that wishes to create and sustain quality service systems should be able to do so.

In March 2016, Senators Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) and Roy Blunt (R-MO) and Representatives Leonard Lance (R-NJ) and Doris Matsui (D-CA) introduced the Expand Excellence in Mental Health Act (S. 2525/ H.R. 4567), which would allow all 24 planning states to participate in the demonstration. Key groups such as the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA), the National Guard Association, National Sheriffs Association and the National Federation of Police have endorsed the Expand Excellence in Mental Health Act.

### **WHY DO WE NEED THE EXPAND EXCELLENCE IN MENTAL HEALTH ACT?**

**IT IS GOOD FOR PATIENTS AS WELL AS PROVIDERS.** The Excellence Act demonstration establishes strict standards for quality of care and demonstrated outcomes to ensure mental health and substance use services are integrated with physical services, making care more efficient and reducing costs associated with uncoordinated physical and behavioral health care.



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**LACK OF ACCESS TO TREATMENT IS DRAINING RESOURCES FROM CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES.** Two-thirds of inmates in our jails and prisons meet the criteria for a substance use disorder. Law enforcement agencies consistently report increasing encounters with individuals experiencing acute psychiatric symptoms – leading directly to a “boarding” crisis in hospital emergency rooms in cities large and small.

**NO STATE SHOULD BE TURNED DOWN** Currently, 24 states are overhauling their mental health systems for the chance at one of eight demonstration spots. By allowing each interested state to participate in the program, Congress could expand capacity in the behavioral health system to care for more Americans and alleviate the growing pressure on our nation’s jails and emergency rooms.

CURRENT AS OF 5/26/2016

## COSPONSORS

### S. 2525

**MO:** Roy Blunt (R) *Lead Sponsor*

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### H.R. 4567

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