February 13, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Schumer, Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leader McCarthy:

The undersigned organizations are writing to urge you to extend and expand the Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) demonstration before the May 22, 2020 expiration deadline. As our country continues to confront an addiction crisis, it is clear we have not built the necessary and sustainable addiction treatment capacity across our nation. Congress has shown leadership in extending the Excellence Act demonstration program, which is an important step in addressing this issue. However, now is the time to make the long-term investment in expanding the program’s addiction and mental health care services to the additional 11 states ready to participate in this demonstration.

Since launching in 2017, CCBHCs dramatically improved access to community-based addiction and mental health care in the eight states where they operate, particularly in regard to increasing opioid addiction services. CCBHCs hired hundreds of new addiction-focused clinicians, expanded medication-assisted treatment (MAT), and reduced patient wait times. Since March 31, 2019, Congress has acted to extend the demonstration six times (HR 1839, S. 2047, HR 3253, HR 4378, HR 3055, HR 1865). In addition, the Grassley/Wyden bill, the Prescription Drug Pricing Reduction Act of 2019 (S. 2543) continues the existing demonstration for two years and adds all 11 pending states. However, with the CCBHC demonstration set to end in May 22, 2020, access to these lifesaving treatments could be lost.

Results from a National Council for Behavioral Health report show that states face a looming crisis in access to care if the CCBHC demonstration ends on May 22, 2020. Specifically, the end of the CCBHC program would result in 9,100 patients losing access to medication-assisted treatment (MAT) and 3,000 clinicians and staff would be laid off. Patients would lose timely access to services with 77 percent of CCBHCs reporting that they would have to re-establish a waitlist for services, and over half of CCBHCs reporting that they will have to turn people away from care.

CCBHC certification requires coordinated care with partners in the criminal justice system and veteran’s organizations. In communities with CCBHCs, sheriffs and police officers now have support from trained mental health and addiction professionals, alleviating the burden on frontline officers and helping people get access to the correct level of treatment.
Currently, California, Colorado, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Mexico, North Carolina, Rhode Island and Texas are on the waitlist to participate in this important demonstration.

If Congress does not allow the additional states to participate in the CCBHC program, clinics in those states will not have the opportunity to create this vital partnership with law enforcement that helps reduce recidivism and connect people to the right level of care.

The Excellence in Mental Health and Addiction Treatment Expansion Act (S. 824/H.R. 1767) would ensure that states do not see their progress in expanding mental health and addiction care stripped away in the coming months. The bill extends the current CCBHCs’ activities for two more years and expands the program to 11 more states that applied but were excluded from participation by the eight-state limit in the current law.

We urge Congress to act swiftly to extend and expand the program before the May deadline. Thank you for your leadership in addressing this critical issue.

Sincerely,

A New PATH (Parents for Addiction Treatment & Healing)
American Art Therapy Association
American Art Therapy Association
American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy
American Association for Psychoanalysis in Clinical Social Work
American Association of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
American Counseling Association
American Dance Therapy Association
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
American Group Psychotherapy Association
American Mental Health Counselors Association
American Occupational Therapy Association
American Osteopathic Academy of Addiction Medicine
American Psychiatric Association
American Psychological Association
American Society of Addiction Medicine
Anxiety and Depression Association of America
Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare
Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness
California Consortium of Addiction Programs and Professionals
Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
Cities Thrive Mental Health Coalition
Clinical Social Work Association
Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance
Dil to Dil
Eating Disorders Coalition
Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice International
International Bipolar Foundation
The Jewish Federations of North America
The Kennedy Forum
Mental Health America
Mothers Against Prescription Drug Abuse
MQ Foundation
NAADAC, the Association of Addiction Professionals
National Alliance on Mental Illness
National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health
National Association for Children’s Behavioral Health
National Association for Rural Mental Health
National Association of Addiction Treatment Providers
National Association of County Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability Directors
National Association of Social Workers
National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors
National Coalition for Maternal Mental Health
National Council for Behavioral Health
National Disability Rights Network
National Eating Disorders Association
National Federation of Families for Children’s Mental Health
National League for Nursing
National Register of Health Service Psychologists
National Safety Council
No Health Without Mental Health
OCD Foundation
School Social Work Association of America
SMART Recovery
Steinberg Institute
Treatment Advocacy Center
Treatment Communities of America
Trevor Project
Trinity Health
Trust for America’s Health
Youth MOVE National