

November 18, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate  
S-230 Capitol Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer  
Minority Leader, U.S. Senate  
S- 221 Capitol Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives  
H-232 Capitol Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Minority Leader, U.S. House of Representatives  
H-204 Capitol Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

**RE: FY2021 Appropriations**

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

On behalf of the National Council for Behavioral Health – a national organization representing over 3,300 community mental health centers and addiction treatment provider organizations – I am writing to urge Congress to approve full and complete funding for the entirety of Fiscal Year 2021 by passing an omnibus appropriations package, foregoing any stopgap funding measures.

As of this month, Senate and House appropriators have completed their work outlining detailed, yearlong funding allotments for programs across the federal government, including at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). These thoughtful proposals represent funding allocations for lifesaving programs across the health care spectrum at a time when access to needed programs and services is crucial.

According to a Kaiser Family Foundation Tracking Poll conducted earlier this year, 53% of adults in the U.S. reported that their mental health had been negatively impacted by worry and stress related to COVID-19. This included difficulty sleeping (36%) or eating (32%), increases in alcohol consumption or substance use (12%), and worsening chronic mental health conditions (12%). Similarly, a recent Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Mortality and Morbidity Weekly Report reported one in four young adults between the ages of 18 and 24 indicate they have considered suicide because of stress brought on by the pandemic.

Simultaneously, overdose deaths are on the rise across the country. According to the White House Office of Drug Control Policy, overdose fatalities were up nearly 12% compared to last year. The American Medical Association reports that more than 30 states have already seen increases in opioid-related deaths. Importantly, a recent report from Well Being Trust and the Robert Graham Center estimates that, without action, our nation may experience tens of thousands of additional deaths from drugs, alcohol, and suicide.



Jeff Richardson, MBA, LCSW-C, Board Chair  
Charles Ingoglia, MSW, President and CEO

With the converging mental health, substance use and fiscal crises presenting a momentous challenge to the entire behavioral health community, the National Council is seeking your bipartisan support to pass an omnibus FY2021 budget package, foregoing any stopgap funding measures. Such action is necessary to meet the unprecedented needs of individuals, families, and essential workers, and to provide crucial assistance to the mental health and substance use treatment providers struggling to battle the devastating impacts of the coronavirus pandemic.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Charles Ingoglia". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Charles Ingoglia, MSW  
President and CEO  
National Council for Behavioral Health