

July 12, 2017

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
S-230 U.S. Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
S-221 U.S. Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leader McConnell and Leader Schumer,

The undersigned organizations are writing to share our views on critical provisions we believe must be included in any legislation modifying the nation's health care system. We also want to share serious concerns with several of the reforms included in the discussion draft of the *Better Care Reconciliation Act of 2017* (BCRA). We are very concerned that the BCRA's proposed changes to our health care system will result in reductions in health care coverage, particularly for vulnerable populations including those suffering from substance use disorders and mental illness, and we cannot support the bill.

We collectively represent consumers, families, providers, health care and social service professionals, criminal justice professionals, advocates and allied organizations who are committed to meaningful and comprehensive policies to reduce the toll of substance use disorders and mental illness through prevention, treatment and recovery support services.

We appreciate the provision in the BCRA to require coverage of mental health and substance use disorder treatment consistent with the *Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act* (MHPAEA) as part of the new Medicaid Flexibility Program. However, we do not support many of the other changes to the health care system in the discussion draft that would result in reduced access to substance use disorder and mental health treatment, including changes that would cap federal funding for Medicaid, end the Medicaid expansion, and eliminate mental health and substance use disorder benefit protections for Americans insured through the small group and individual markets.

In the face of the opioid overdose and suicide epidemics, equitable access to a full continuum of mental health and substance use disorder treatment services, including medications to treat substance use disorders and mental illness, must be an essential component of health care coverage. It is also critical that substance use disorders and mental illness be covered on par with other medical conditions consistent with MHPAEA.

As the Senate considers the BCRA, we ask that the bill:

- Maintain benefit protections for mental health and substance use disorder treatment and recovery support services through the exchanges and individual/small group markets, and maintain requirements that those benefits be offered at parity with medical benefits
- Maintain Medicaid's current financing structure, including the Medicaid expansion

More than 20 million Americans currently have health care coverage due to the *Affordable Care Act* (ACA), including millions of Americans with substance use disorders and mental illness. This coverage is a critical lifeline for these individuals, many of whom were unable to access effective treatment before the ACA's expansion of Medicaid eligibility to low-income adults, and its requirement that Medicaid expansion plans and plans sold in the individual and small group markets cover substance use disorder and mental health treatment services at parity with medical and surgical services. **As such, we have serious concerns with provisions in the discussion draft that would allow states to easily waive Essential Health Benefit requirements through Section 1332 waivers, end Essential Health Benefit requirements for the Medicaid expansion population, phase out Medicaid expansion and change Medicaid to a per-capita or block grant financing system.**

Additionally, we understand at least \$45 billion may be added to the legislation for opioid use disorder and mental health treatment and recovery support services. While we appreciate the intent of the funding, we are concerned that grant funding cannot replace sustainable Medicaid reimbursement. Given that grant funding is subject to the unpredictability of the annual appropriations process, health care providers cannot rely on it to run their practices. Grant funding also requires applications and reporting that fall outside the normal workstream of physician practices, making it impractical for many providers to incorporate it into their business model. **The inclusion of additional targeted grant funding for opioid use disorder treatment and recovery support services does not alleviate our concerns with the legislation as grant funding cannot replace sustainable Medicaid reimbursement.**

The Medicaid expansion in particular has led to significant increases in coverage and treatment access for persons with substance use disorders and mental illness. In states that expanded Medicaid, the share of people with substance use disorders or mental illness who were hospitalized but uninsured fell from about 20 percent in 2013 to 5 percent by mid-2015, and Medicaid expansion has been associated with an 18.3 percent reduction in the unmet need for substance use disorder treatment services among low-income adults. Rolling back the Medicaid expansion and/or fundamentally changing Medicaid's financing structure to cap spending on health care services will certainly reduce access to evidence-based treatments and reverse much or all progress made on the opioid crisis last year. Moreover, the loss of Medicaid-covered mental health and substance use disorder services for adults would result in more family disruption and out-of-home placements for children, significant trauma which has its own long-term health effects and a further burden on a child welfare system that is struggling to meet the current demand for foster home capacity.

Medicaid funding for mental health and substance use disorder treatment services for low-income populations must be predictable, sustainable, and integrated with financing mechanisms for general medical care to ensure consistent access to treatment and support the long-term development and retention of a substance use disorder and mental health clinician workforce. Capping federal Medicaid funding through per-capita caps or block grants would strain state budgets and likely force states to cut benefits, lower provider reimbursement rates, and/or limit access to care. These changes would be devastating to states grappling with the current opioid overdose and suicide epidemics.

The ACA's Medicaid expansion, Essential Health Benefit requirements for mental health and substance use disorder treatment coverage, and extension of parity protections to the individual and small group market have surely reduced the burden of the opioid misuse and overdose and suicide epidemics and saved lives. As you consider this legislation, we ask that you ensure substance use disorder and mental health treatment benefits continue to be available to Americans enrolled in the individual, small and large group markets as well as Medicaid plans and that these benefits are compliant with the *Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act*.

Finally, throughout this process, we implore you to keep in mind how your decisions will affect the millions of Americans suffering from substance use disorders and mental illness who may lose their health care coverage entirely or see reductions in benefits that impede access to needed treatment.

Sincerely,

1. 10,000 beds
2. Acadia Healthcare
3. Adcare Educational Institute
4. Addiction Education Society
5. Addiction Haven
6. Addiction Resource Council
7. Addiction Services Council
8. Addiction Policy Forum
9. Addiction Treatment Center of New England

10. Addiction Connections Resource
11. Advocates for Recovery Colorado
12. Advocates, Inc.
13. Alabama Society of Addiction Medicine
14. Alano Club of Portland
15. Alcohol & Addictions Resource Center
16. Alcohol/Drug Council of North Carolina
17. Alliance for Strong Families and Communities
18. Alternatives Unlimited, Inc.
19. Amesbury Psychological Center, Inc.
20. American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry
21. American Correctional Association
22. American Federation of State, County and Municipal, Employees (AFSCME)
23. American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry
24. American Art Therapy Association
25. American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy
26. American Association for the Treatment of Opioid Dependence (AATOD)
27. American Association of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry
28. American Association on Health and Disability
29. American Dance Therapy Association
30. American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
31. American Group Psychotherapy Association
32. American Medical Student Association
33. American Mental Health Counselors Association
34. American Nurses Association
35. American Psychiatric Association
36. American Psychological Association
37. American Society of Addiction Medicine
38. Amida Care
39. A New PATH
40. Anthony's Act
41. Anxiety and Depression Association of America
42. Arc of South Norfolk, The
43. Arise & Flourish
44. Arizona's Children Association
45. Arizona Council of Human Service Providers
46. Arizona Society of Addiction Medicine
47. Arkansas Society of Addiction Medicine
48. Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare
49. Association for Behavioral Healthcare of Massachusetts
50. Association for Community Affiliated Plans (ACAP)
51. Association for Community Human Service Agencies
52. Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations (AAPCHO)
53. Association of Community Mental Health Centers of Kansas, Inc.
54. Association of Flight Attendants – CWA, AFL-CIO
55. Association of Persons Affected by Addiction (APAA)
56. Association of Recovery Schools
57. Association of Recovery Community Organizations
58. Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses
59. A Stepping Stone to Success
60. Atlantic Prevention Resources, Inc.
61. Avanti Wellness
62. Awakening Recovery

63. BAMSI
64. Bangor Area Recovery Network, Inc.
65. Bay Cove Human Services
66. Bay State Community Services, Inc.
67. Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
68. Behavioral Health Network, Inc.
69. Better Life in Recovery
70. Bill Wilson Center
71. Boston Alcohol and Substance Abuse Programs, Inc.
72. Boston Healthcare for the Homeless
73. Boston Public Health Commission
74. BreakingTheCycles
75. Bridge of Central Massachusetts, Inc., The
76. Bridgewell
77. Brien Center for Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, The
78. Brookline Community Mental Health Center
79. Bullhook Community Health Center, Inc.
80. Burke Recovery
81. CADA of Northwest Louisiana
82. California Association of Alcohol and Drug Program Executives (CAADPE)
83. California Consortium of Addiction Programs & Professionals
84. California Council of Community Behavioral Health Agencies
85. California Institute for Behavioral Health Solutions
86. California Society of Addiction Medicine
87. Cambridge Health Alliance
88. Camelot Care Centers, Inc.
89. Cape Cod Healthcare Centers for Behavioral Health
90. Capital Area Project Vox
91. Casa Esperanza
92. Casa Pacifica Centers for Children and Families
93. Catholic Charities Family Counseling and Guidance Center
94. Catholic Family Center
95. Center for Human Development
96. Center for Open Recovery
97. Center for Recovery and Wellness Resources
98. Central City Concern
99. Chautauqua Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Council
100. Chicago Recovering Communities Coalition (CRCC)
101. Child & Family Services, Inc.
102. Child and Family Services of New Hampshire
103. Children's Friend, Inc.
104. Children's Home Society of Washington
105. Children's Law Center
106. Children's Services of Roxbury
107. CleanSlate Centers
108. Clergy for a New Drug Policy
109. Clinical and Support Options, Inc.
110. Clinical Social Work Association
111. Coalition of Addiction Students and Professionals Pursuing Advocacy (CASPPA)
112. Colorado Society of Addiction Medicine
113. Community Catalyst
114. Communities for Recovery
115. Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA)

116. Community Counseling of Bristol County, Inc.
117. Community-Minded Enterprises
118. Community Oriented Correctional Health Services (COCHS)
119. Community Services Institute
120. Community Solutions
121. Community Substance Abuse Centers
122. Comrades of Hope
123. Connecticut Community for Addiction Recovery (CCAR)
124. Connecticut Society of Addiction Medicine
125. Counselors Obediently Preventing Substance Abuse (COPS)
126. Cutchins Programs for Children and Families
127. DarJune Recovery Support Services & Café
128. Dash for Recovery
129. Davis Direction Foundation - The Zone
130. DC Fights Back
131. DC Recovery Community Alliance
132. Delphi Behavioral Health Group/MHD
133. Desert Eagle Addiction Recovery
134. Detroit Recovery Project, Inc.
135. Dimock Community Health Center
136. Disability Rights Pennsylvania
137. Doctors for America
138. Doctors for Recovery
139. Dorchester Recovery Initiative
140. Drug and Alcohol Service Providers Organization of Pennsylvania (DASPOP)
141. Drug Policy Alliance
142. Drug Prevention Resources
143. East Bay Agency for Children
144. Easy Does It, Inc.
145. Eating Disorders Coalition
146. Edinburg Center, The
147. Eliot Community Human Services
148. El Paso Alliance
149. Engaged Recovery Community Services
150. Faces and Voices of Recovery
151. Facing Addiction
152. Family Advocates of Georgia, Inc
153. Family Focused Treatment Association
154. Family Service Association
155. Family Service of Greater Boston
156. FAVOR Greenville
157. FAVOR Low Country
158. FAVOR Mississippi Recovery Advocacy Project
159. FAVOR Pee Dee
160. FAVOR Tri-County
161. FED UP! Coalition
162. Fellowship Foundation Recovery Community Organization
163. Fenway Health
164. FHR
165. Florida Society of Addiction Medicine
166. Floridians for Recovery
167. Foundation for Recovery
168. Friends of Recovery - New York

169. FSA – Family Service Agency
170. Futures of Palm Beach
171. G III Associates
172. GAAMHA
173. Gandara Center
174. Georgia Council on Substance Abuse
175. Georgia Society of Addiction Medicine
176. Georgians for a Healthy Future
177. Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice
178. Gosnold on Cape Cod
179. Gould Farm
180. Granite Pathways
181. Greater Macomb Project Vox
182. Greater Philadelphia Association for Recovery Education
183. Great South Bay Coalition
184. Greater Cincinnati Recovery Resource Collaborative (GCRRC)
185. Griffin Recovery Enterprises
186. Harm Reduction Coalition
187. Health Management Group, LTD
188. High Point Treatment Center
189. Hillview Mental Health Center, Inc.
190. HIV Medicine Association
191. Home for Little Wanderers, The
192. Hope2Gather Foundation
193. HOPE for New Hampshire Recovery
194. Hope House Addiction Services
195. Horizon Health Services
196. IC&RC
197. Indivisible St. Louis
198. Illinois Association for Behavioral Health
199. Illinois Association of Rehabilitation Facilities (IARF)
200. Indiana Society of Addiction Medicine
201. International Nurses Society on Addictions
202. Institute for Health and Recovery
203. Iowa Association of Community Providers
204. Iowa Behavioral Health Association
205. Italian Home for Children, Inc.
206. Jackson Area Recovery Community
207. Jewish Family and Children's Services (JF&CS)
208. Joint Coalition on Health
209. Jordan's Hope for Recovery
210. Judge Baker Children's Center
211. Juneau Recovery Community
212. Justice Resource Institute (JRI)
213. Ka Hale Pomaika'i
214. Kentucky Society of Addiction Medicine
215. KEY Program, Inc., The
216. Kyes 2 a 2<sup>nd</sup> Chance
217. Lahey Health Behavioral Services
218. Lakeshore Foundation
219. Latah Recovery Center
220. Legal Action Center
221. Lifehouse Recovery Connection

222. Lifeline Connections
223. Long Island Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc.
224. Long Island Recovery Association (LIRA)
225. Lost Dreams Awaken Center, Inc.
226. Lotus Peer Recovery/SoberKerrville
227. Lowell Community Health Center, Inc.
228. Lowell House, Inc.
229. LUK, Inc.
230. Madison County Council on Alcoholism & Substance Abuse
231. Magnolia Addiction Support
232. Maine Alliance for Addiction Recovery
233. Mariah's Mission Fund of the Mid-Shor Community Foundation
234. Mark Garwood SHARE Foundation
235. Martha's Vineyard Community Services
236. Maryland-DC Society of Addiction Medicine
237. Maryland House Detox
238. Maryland Recovery Organization Connecting Communities (M-ROCC)
239. Massachusetts Organization for Addiction Recovery (MOAR)
240. Massachusetts Society of Addiction Medicine
241. Maxed Out Drug Prevention
242. McShin Foundation
243. Mental Health Association
244. Message Carriers of Pennsylvania, Inc.
245. Messengers of Recovery Awareness
246. MHA of Greater Lowell
247. Michigan's Children
248. Michigan Recovery Voices
249. Michigan Society of Addiction Medicine
250. Middlesex Human Service Agency, Inc
251. Mid-Michigan Recovery Services, Inc.
252. Midwest Society of Addiction Medicine
253. Mi-HOPE - Michigan Heroin & Opiate Prevention and Education
254. Minnesota Association of Community Mental Health Programs (MACMHP)
255. Minnesota Recovery Connection
256. Minnesota Society of Addiction Medicine
257. Missouri Recovery Network
258. MOBER
259. Mountain View Prevention Services, Inc.
260. NAADAC – the Association for Addiction Professionals
261. National Alliance for Medication-Assisted Recovery (NAMA)
262. National Alliance on Mental Illness
263. National Alliance on Mental Illness – San Mateo County
264. National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health
265. National Alliance to End Homelessness
266. National Association for Rural Mental Health
267. National Association of Addiction Treatment Providers
268. National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists
269. National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
270. National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors (NASMHPD)
271. National Association for Children's Behavioral Health
272. National Association for Rural Mental Health
273. National Association of County Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability Directors
274. National Association of County & City Health Officials

275. National Association of Social Workers (NASW)
276. National Black Justice Coalition
277. National Council for Behavioral Health
278. National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse
279. National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence
280. National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence of E. San Gabriel & Pomona Valleys
281. National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence--Greater Phoenix
282. National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence – Maryland
283. National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence – San Diego
284. National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence of the San Fernando Valley
285. National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse-St. Louis Area
286. National Disability Rights Network
287. National Federation of Families for Children’s Mental Health
288. National Health Care for the Homeless Council
289. National League for Nursing
290. National Safety Council
291. National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable
292. Navigate Recovery Gwinnett
293. Nevada Society of Addiction Medicine
294. New Futures and New Futures Kids Count
295. New Jersey Association of Mental Health and Addiction Agencies, Inc.
296. New Jersey Society of Addiction Medicine
297. New Life Counseling & Wellness Center, Inc.
298. New Mexico Society of Addiction Medicine
299. New York Association of Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services
300. New York Society of Addiction Medicine
301. New York State Council for Behavioral Health
302. NFI Massachusetts, Inc.
303. NMSAS Recovery Center
304. No Health without Mental Health
305. North Charles, Inc.
306. North Cottage Program, Inc.
307. Northeast Center for Youth and Families, The
308. Northern New England Society of Addiction Medicine
309. Northern Ohio Recovery Association (NORA)
310. Northwest Indian Treatment Center
311. North Suffolk Mental Health Association, Inc.
312. Northern Rivers Family Services
313. North Carolina Society of Addiction Medicine (NCSAM)
314. O’Brien House
315. Ohio Society of Addiction Medicine (OHSAM)
316. Oklahoma Citizen Advocates for Recovery & Treatment Association (OCARTA)
317. Old Colony YMCA
318. Open Doorway of Cape Cod
319. Oregon Recovery High School
320. Oregon Society of Addiction Medicine
321. Overcoming Addiction Radio
322. Parity Implementation Coalition
323. Partnership for Drug-Free Kids
324. Partners in Prevention/National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence of Hudson County, Inc.
325. P.E.E.R Wellness Center, Inc.
326. PEER360 Recovery Alliance



327. Pennsylvania Recovery Organization - Achieving Community Together - (PRO-ACT)
328. Pennsylvania Recovery Organizations Alliance (PRO-A)
329. Pennsylvania Society of Addiction Medicine
330. People Advocating Recovery - PAR
331. Phoenix Houses of New England
332. Phoenix Multisport Boston
333. Pine Street Inn
334. Pivot, Alcohol and Substance Abuse Council of Jefferson County, Inc.
335. PLR Athens
336. Pretrial Justice Institute
337. Prevention Network OCAA
338. Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association
339. Putnam Family & Community Services, Inc.
340. RASE Project
341. REAL- Michigan (Recovery, Education, Advocacy & Leadership)
342. Recover Project/Western MA Training
343. Recovery Allies Of West Michigan
344. RecoveryATX
345. Recovery Café Seattle
346. Recovery Community Foundation of Forsyth
347. Recovery Communities of North Carolina
348. Recovery Community Of Durham
349. Recovery Consultants of Atlanta
350. Recovery Data Solutions
351. Recovery - Friendly Taos County
352. Recovery Idaho, Inc.
353. Recovery is Happening
354. RecoveryNC (Governors Institute on Substance Abuse)
355. Recovery Point at HER Place
356. Recovery Point of Bluefield
357. Recovery Point of Charleston
358. Recovery Point of Huntington
359. Recovery Point of Parkersburg
360. Recovery Point of West Virginia
361. Recover Wyoming
362. reGROUP
363. Rhode Island Communities for Addiction Recovery Efforts (RICAREs)
364. Riverside Community Care
365. Robby's Voice
366. ROcovery Fitness
367. Rockland Council on Alcoholism and Other Drug Dependence, Inc.
368. Sandusky Artisans Recovery Community Center
369. Sandy Hook Promise
370. Serenity Sistas
371. ServiceNet
372. Shatterproof
373. SMART Recovery
374. S.O.A.R™ Yoga (Success Over Addiction and Relapse)
375. Solano Recovery Project
376. Solutions Recovery, Inc.
377. Sonoran Prevention Works
378. South Arkansas Regional Health Center, Inc
379. Sound Community Services, Inc.

380. South Middlesex Opportunity Council, Inc. (SMOC)
381. South Bay Community Services
382. South Carolina Society of Addiction Medicine
383. South Central Human Relations Center
384. South End Community Health Center
385. South Shore Mental Health
386. Southwest Washington Recovery Coalition
387. Spectrum Health Systems, Inc.
388. SpiritWorks Foundation
389. Springfield Recovery Community Center
390. Springs Recovery Connection
391. SSTAR
392. STEP Industries
393. Steppingstone, Incorporated
394. Steve Rummeler Hope Network
395. Student Assistance Services Corp
396. Substance Use and Mental Health Leadership Council of Rhode Island
397. Technical Assistance Collaborative, Inc.
398. Tennessee Society of Addiction Medicine
399. Texas Society of Addiction Medicine
400. The Addict's Parents United (TAP United)
401. The Alliance
402. The Ammon Foundation
403. The Bridge Foundation
404. The Bridge Way School
405. The Campaign for Trauma-Informed Policy and Practice
406. The Chris Atwood Foundation
407. The Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse
408. The Council on Alcohol & Drug Abuse for Greater New Orleans
409. The DOOR - DeKalb Open Opportunity for Recovery
410. The Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice
411. The Kennedy Forum
412. The Ohana Center
413. The Peggie & Paul Shevlin Family Foundation
414. The Recovery Channel
415. The Rest of Your Life
416. The Trevor Project
417. The Village Family Services
418. The Village Project, Inc.
419. There Is No Hero In Heroin Foundation
420. Tia Hart Recovery Community Program
421. T.O.R.C.H Inc.
422. Toward Independent Living and Learning, TILL, Inc.
423. Treatment Communities of America
424. Trilogy Recovery Community
425. True Recovery, LLC
426. Trust for America's Health
427. Turning Point Center of Central Vermont
428. Two Guys and a Girl
429. UMass Memorial Community Healthlink, Inc.
430. United Methodist Church - General Board of Church and Society
431. Utah Support Advocates for Recovery Awareness (USARA)
432. Valley Hope

433. Veterans Inc.
434. Vermont Council of Developmental and Mental Health Services
435. Vermont Recovery Network
436. Victory Programs, Inc.
437. Vinfen
438. Virginia Association of Recovery Residences
439. Voice for Adoption
440. Voices of Hope for Cecil County
441. Voices of Recovery San Mateo County
442. Volunteers of America of Massachusetts, Inc.
443. WAI-IAM, Inc. and RISE Recovery Community
444. Walker, Inc.
445. Washtenaw Recovery Advocacy Project (WRAP)
446. Washington Federation of State Employees
447. Washington Recovery Alliance
448. Washington Society of Addiction Medicine
449. Watershed Treatment Programs
450. Wayside Youth & Family Support Network
451. WEConnect
452. Wellspring Recovery Services
453. West Virginia Society of Addiction Medicine
454. WholeLife Recovery Community/ Arizona Recovery Coalition
455. Wisconsin Recovery Community Organization (WIRCO)
456. Wisconsin Society of Addiction Medicine
457. Wisconsin Voices for Recovery
458. Wyoming County CARES
459. Yoga of Recovery
460. Young Invincibles
461. Young People in Recovery
462. Young People in Recovery – Los Angeles
463. Youth Opportunities Upheld, Inc.
464. Youth Villages