

June 7, 2021

Senator Patty Murray
Chairwoman,
Committee on Health,
Education, Labor and Pensions
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Richard Burr
Ranking Member,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor
and Pensions
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairwoman Murray and Ranking Member Burr,

On behalf of the undersigned nation's leading mental health, addiction, and well-being advocacy groups, we write to express our strong support for the nomination of Dr. Miriam E. Delphin-Rittmon for Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The Assistant Secretary will play a key role in coordinating the federal government's initiatives to address the serious mental health and substance use challenges currently facing our country; we therefore encourage a prompt confirmation so we can begin to work together as soon as possible to address these challenges.

The Mental Health Liaison Group (MHLG) is a coalition of organizations representing consumers, family members, mental health and addiction providers, advocates, payers, and other stakeholders committed to strengthening Americans' access to mental health and addiction care. As trusted leaders in the field, our 70+ member organizations are dedicated to elevating the national conversation around mental health and addiction. Together, we work to advance federal policies that support prevention, early intervention, treatment, and recovery services and supports.

The COVID-19 pandemic has magnified many of our nation's most neglected issues, most notably our widespread mental health crisis. More than [26 million individuals](#) are experiencing mental illness without access to treatment, and every year thousands of Americans overdose and die from the opioid epidemic. We need a passionate and experienced public health leader at the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to spearhead national efforts to reduce the impact of substance abuse and mental illness on America's communities.

Dr. Delphin-Rittmon has established herself as that capable leader in the mental health and addiction space throughout her distinguished career. She is a public health expert with over 20 years of experience in the mental health and addiction field at the local, state, and national levels. Over the span of her career, she has become an expert at designing, evaluating, and administering mental health, substance use, and prevention services across systems. As a clinical psychologist, she holds a faculty appointment in the Yale Department of Psychiatry and has published several peer-reviewed research publications on a range of issues such as exploring ethnic differences in coping and help-seeking behavior and assessing the impact of race and stereotyping biases on the clinical judgment process. Her

experience and expertise on mental health issues from both a policy and research perspective make her the ideal candidate to lead SAMHSA.

Further, Dr. Delphin-Rittmon currently serves as the Commissioner of the Connecticut State Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, a position she was appointed to in 2015. In this role, she has demonstrated her commitment to meaningful community inclusion, culturally responsive services, and a recovery-oriented approach. She has managed a multimillion-dollar budget, thousands of employees, and led the department through the COVID pandemic; rapidly transforming their agency operations in order to maintain core services for the 110,000 individuals they serve. Dr. Delphin-Rittmon has been instrumental in securing grants targeting women's services, recovery, the opioid crisis, suicide prevention, Hurricane Maria, and the behavioral impact of the pandemic. She also co-chaired Connecticut's Alcohol and Drug Policy Council that guided many opioid crisis interventions, including the introduction of a recovery coach program that served as a model for federal legislation.

Prior to serving as Commissioner, Dr. Delphin-Rittmon completed a two-year appointment at the White House, where she worked as the Senior Advisor to the Administrator of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. In this position, Dr. Delphin-Rittmon was involved in a wide variety of policy efforts focused on equitable behavioral health, workforce development, and mental healthcare reform. Since her tenure at SAMHSA, she has received multiple commendations for her work in the field, including the 2019 State Service Award from the National Association of State Drug and Alcohol Directors and the 2016 Mental Health Award for Excellence from the United Nations Committee on Mental Health.

On top of her strong resume, Dr. Delphin-Rittmon is widely known in the field as a leader of integrity who brings a strong sense of compassion to all her work. We are eager to begin working with her to ensure all Americans have access to vital mental health support and substance use recovery. The undersigned MHLG organizations strongly endorse Dr. Delphin-Rittmon's nomination for Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Child and
Adolescent Psychiatry

American Association for Marriage and
Family Therapy

American Association for Psychoanalysis in
Clinical Social Work

American Dance Therapy Association

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

American Mental Health Counselors
Association

American Occupational Therapy
Association

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

Association Of Community Mental Health
Authorities of Illinois

BasicNeeds US

Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law

Centerstone

Children and Adults with Attention-
Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (CHADD)

Children's Mental Health Network

Clinical Social Work Association

College of Psychiatric and Neurologic
Pharmacists (CPNP)

Crisis Residential Association

Crisis Text Line

DBHIDS

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance

Eating Disorders Coalition

Education Development Center

Geriatric Psychiatry Clinic

Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and
Social Justice

Inseperable

International Certification & Reciprocity
Consortium

Mental Health America

NAADAC, the Association for Addiction
Professionals

NACBHDD

NARMH

National Alliance on Mental Illness

National Association for Children's
Behavioral Health

National Association of Addiction
Treatment Providers

National Association of Pediatric Nurse
Practitioners

National Association of State Mental Health
Program Directors

National Council for Mental Wellbeing

National League for Nursing

New Jersey Association of Mental Health
and Addiction Agencies, Inc.

NHMH - No Health w/o Mental Health

Postpartum Support International

REDC Consortium

RI International, Inc.

SMART Recovery

The American Counseling Association

The Jed Foundation

The Kennedy Forum

The National Alliance to Advance
Adolescent Health

The National Council for Mental Wellbeing

The Trevor Project

Treatment Communities of America

Vibrant Emotional Health

Well Being Trust