

October 13, 2022

President Joseph R. Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

On behalf of the undersigned 134 national and state organizations who are dedicated to the mental health and well-being of infants, children, adolescents, and young adults, we write to thank you for the attention you and your administration have given to the youth mental health crisis in the U.S. This month marks the one-year anniversary of the declaration of a National State of Emergency in Children's Mental Health issued by the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, and the Children's Hospital Association.ⁱ While much has been done by the federal government to address the crisis, the mental health of our nation's youth continues to deteriorate. We urge you to treat the youth mental health crisis as the national emergency it continues to be and declare a federal National Emergency in children's mental health.

Suicide is increasing for children and teens at alarming rates—especially for Black boys and girls under age 12--and is now the leading cause of death for Asian American youth and the second leading cause of death for young people nationally.ⁱⁱ Emergency department visits for suspected youth suicide attempts have increased dramaticallyⁱⁱⁱ and those for eating disorders have doubled during the pandemic.^{iv} Meanwhile the numbers of young children diagnosed with anxiety, depression, and behavioral or conduct issues are growing at troubling rates.^v Systemic inequities such as racism, homophobia, transphobia, economic inequality, under-resourced schools, and medically underserved communities have disproportionately limited access to mental health services for young people from historically marginalized communities. Parents and caregivers are also trying to manage their own mental health needs while supporting their families in the face of economic, housing, and nutrition insecurity.

We applaud the mental health reforms outlined in your Unity Agenda during the State of the Union address and the commitment you have made to youth mental health in your budget to Congress. In addition, we are grateful for HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra's leadership on youth mental health and for the progress toward improved pediatric mental health care made by the Surgeon General, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, and other agencies throughout HHS.

However, our nation's youth, especially youth of color, need much more. Issuing a National Emergency Declaration would galvanize existing critical funding streams and support to help ensure that all children and adolescents can access the full continuum of mental and behavioral health care from promotion and prevention to early identification and treatment, especially in times of crisis. Of particular note, we need a robust and comprehensive mental health workforce strategy that prioritizes recruitment of underrepresented populations and ensures trained pediatric mental health and primary care professionals are adequately paid for the services they provide.

There is much more work to do by the Administration and in Congress. We urge you to join us in naming the youth mental health crisis exactly what it is--a National Emergency that requires all sectors to come together and take action.

We look forward to continuing to work with you to ensure all children receive culturally competent, developmentally appropriate, and trauma-informed mental health care without stigma. Thank you for your leadership on behalf of our nation's children.

Sincerely,

National Organizations

2020 Mom

American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

American Academy of Family Physicians

American Academy of Pediatrics

American Academy of Social Work and Social Welfare

American Association of Psychiatric Pharmacists

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

American Group Psychotherapy Association

American Psychiatric Association

American Psychological Association

Association of Children's Residential & Community Services (ACRC)

Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs

Catholic Health Association of the United States

Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)

Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder

Children's Hospital Association

Children's Hospital of Philadelphia

Committee for Children

Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy & Action

Exceptional Families of the Military

Family Voices

Futures Without Violence

Inseparable

International OCD Foundation

Maryland Regional Council of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

Maternal Mental Health Leadership Alliance

Mental Health America

MomsRising

National Alliance on Mental Illness

National Association for Rural Mental Health

National Association of Counsel for Children

National Association of County Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability Directors

National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners

National Association of Social Workers

National Children's Alliance

National Disability Rights Network (NDRN)

National Eating Disorders Association
National Health Law Program
National League for Nursing
National Network of Depression Centers
Nemours Children's Health
Prevent Blindness
REDC Consortium
RI International
Sandy Hook Promise
School Social Work Association of America
School-Based Health Alliance
The Child Advocate
The College for Behavioral Health Leadership
The Kennedy Forum
The National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health
UNICEF USA
Youth Villages
ZERO TO THREE

State Organizations

Alabama Chapter-American Academy of Pediatrics
American Academy of Pediatrics, Alaska Chapter
American Academy of Pediatrics, California
American Academy of Pediatrics, California Chapter 2
American Academy of Pediatrics, Colorado Chapter
American Academy of Pediatrics, DC Chapter
American Academy of Pediatrics, Rhode Island Chapter
American Academy of Pediatrics, Utah Chapter
American Academy of Pediatrics-Puerto Rico Chapter
Arizona Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Arizona Society of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
Arkansas Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Arkansas Council on Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
California Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
Colorado Child & Adolescent Psychiatric Society (CCAPS)
Connecticut Council of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
Delaware Council of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
Florida Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Georgia Council on Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
Greater Kansas City American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
Greater Saint Louis Regional Organization of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, New York NY

Idaho Chapter of the AAP
Illinois Chapter American Academy of Pediatrics
Iowa Chapter - American Academy of Pediatrics
John Burton Advocates for Youth
KACAP
Kentucky Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Louisiana AAP
Maine Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Maine Council of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
Maryland Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Maryland Regional Council of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
Medstar Health
Mid-Gulf Council for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
Minnesota Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Missouri Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Montana Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
NC Pediatric Society
Nebraska Chapter AAP
Nemours Children's Health
Nevada Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Nevada Council of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry
New England Council of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry
New Jersey Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
New Jersey Council of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
New York Council on Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
New Hampshire Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
New Hampshire Academy of Family Physicians
NH Psychiatric Society
North Carolina Council of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
North Central Florida Council (NORCEF) of AACAP
North Central Florida Council of Child Psychiatrists
North Dakota Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
North East Ohio Society of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
Northern California Regional Organization of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
NYS AAP - Chapter 2
NYS AAP - Chapter 3
Ohio Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Oregon Council of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
Oregon Pediatric Society
Pediatricians Alliance of Ontario, Ontario Chapter, AAP
Puerto Rican Association of Child and Adolescent Psychiatrists
Region of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Nebraska

Regional Council of Eastern Pa and Southern NJ of AACAP
Rhode Island Council of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
South Carolina Council of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
South Dakota Regional Organization of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
Southern California Society of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry
St. Joseph's Villa
Tennessee Chapter of American Academy of Pediatrics
Texas Society of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
The Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Society of Greater Washington
The Massachusetts Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
UNLV
Vermont Association of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
Virginia Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Washington State Council of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
Wisconsin Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Wyoming Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

ⁱ <https://www.aap.org/en/advocacy/child-and-adolescent-healthy-mental-development/aap-aacap-cha-declaration-of-a-national-emergency-in-child-and-adolescent-mental-health/>

ⁱⁱ CDC. National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. Web Based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS) [Accessed 04/21/2021] <http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/index.html>

ⁱⁱⁱ Yard E, Radhakrishnan L, Ballesteros MF, et al. Emergency Department Visits for Suspected Suicide Attempts Among Persons Aged 12–25 Years Before and During the COVID-19 Pandemic — United States, January 2019–May 2021. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 2021;70:888–894. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm7024e1>

^{iv} <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/71/wr/mm7108e2.htm>

^v Lebrun-Harris LA, Ghandour RM, Kogan MD, Warren MD. Five-Year Trends in US Children's Health and Well-being, 2016–2020. *JAMA Pediatr.* 2022;176(7):e220056. doi:10.1001/jamapediatrics.2022.0056