

May 1, 2024

The Honorable Tina Smith
U.S. Senate
720 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
U.S. Senate
731 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Paul Tonko
U.S. House of Representatives
2369 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Brian Fitzpatrick
U.S. House of Representatives
271 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David Trone
U.S. House of Representatives
2404 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Smith, Senator Stabenow, Representative Tonko, Representative Fitzpatrick, and Representative Trone:

The Mental Health Liaison Group (MHLG), a coalition of national organizations representing consumers, families, mental health and addiction providers, advocates, and other stakeholders committed to strengthening access to high-quality mental and behavioral health care, is writing to express our support for H.R.4892/S.3921, the *Medicaid Bump Act of 2024*. This vital and innovative legislation would incentivize states to expand coverage of behavioral health services, including mental health and substance use services, by providing a corresponding increase in the Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) matching rate to 90% for these services.

Data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) indicate that in 2022, the most recent year for which data are available, 12.5% of U.S. adults aged 18 and over regularly had feelings of worry, nervousness, or anxiety, and 5% regularly had feelings of depression. That same year, 4.9% of individuals reported not getting needed mental health care due to cost.ⁱ

Medicaid is the single largest payor of behavioral health services for adults and children, including mental health and substance use services. Unfortunately, many Medicaid beneficiaries face long delays for behavioral health services, including crisis services, due to the nationwide provider shortage. And many state Medicaid programs provide less than ideal coverage for mental health and substance use disorder services.

The effects of insufficient Medicaid coverage for behavioral health services has a particularly acute effect on children and youth. In 2021, the most recent year for which data are available, 29% of U.S. high school students reported persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness.ⁱⁱ The *Medicaid Bump Act* would directly address this, helping connect children and youth in Medicaid-qualified households with behavioral health services.

The *Medicaid Bump Act* would directly address these challenges by improving coverage for Medicaid beneficiaries and helping ensure providers are paid adequately. It would provide a meaningful incentive for providers to offer mental health and substance use services, reducing wait times for patients, while encouraging states to fully cover mental health and substance use services. It would also promote equity, helping to lessen longstanding disparities in access to mental health and substance use disorder services.

For these reasons, we strongly support the *Medicaid Bump Act* to expand access to mental and behavioral health services. We look forward to working with you to advance this legislation during this year.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Pediatrics

American Art Therapy Association

American Association for Psychoanalysis in Clinical Social Work

American Association of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

American Association of Psychiatric Pharmacists

American Association on Health and Disability

American Counseling Association

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

American Mental Health Counselors Association

American Occupational Therapy Association

American Psychiatric Association

American Psychiatric Nurses Association

American Society of Addiction Medicine

Anxiety and Depression Association of America

Anxiety and Depression Association of America

Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare (AABH)

Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness

Center for Law and Social Policy

Centerstone
Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
Children's Hospital Association
Clinical Social Work Association
Community Catalyst
Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice
Huntington's Disease Society of America
IC&RC
Inseparable
International OCD Foundation
Legal Action Center
Maternal Mental Health Leadership Alliance
Mental Health America
NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals
National Alliance on Mental Illness
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Association of Social Workers
National Council for Mental Wellbeing
National Federation of Families
National League for Nursing
National Register of Health Service Psychologists
Policy Center for Maternal Mental Health
Psychotherapy Action Network
The Kennedy Forum
The National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health
The Trevor Project
Tourette Association of America
Trust for America's Health
Youth Villages

ⁱ *Early Release of Selected Estimates Based on Data from the 2022 National Health Interview Survey*. Schiller, Jeannine S. Norris, Tina. Division of Health Interview Statistics, National Center for Health Statistics. (2023.)

ⁱⁱ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2011-2021*. (2022.)