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America's Mental Health and Substance Use Crisis Requires Bipartisan Action
SAMHSA Plays Vital Role in Keeping Americans Healthy and Productive

We call on Congress and the Administration to take immediate action to prevent the erosion of ongoing efforts to address the nation's mental health, suicide, and substance use crises. To meet the bipartisan goal of improving the health span of all Americans, including a strong and vigorous workforce, the critical functions of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) must be protected. Given the Administration's focus on prevention and improving health outcomes, it is paramount that the intended merger of SAMSHA within a new agency, the Administration for a Healthy America (AHA) under a restructured U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and the recent widespread and concerning reductions in staffing, expertise and capacity, do not impede our country's progress in resolving the ongoing behavioral health crisis.

As the leading agency advancing behavioral health in our country, SAMHSA's singular focus and dedicated investments are targeted to improve prevention and health outcomes for those impacted by mental health and substance use disorders (SUDs). The agency's management of evidence-based services, programs, data collection and best practices has guided states and communities across the country to prevent suicides and overdoses and to impact serious mental health challenges – goals shared by all Americans.

The MHLG applauds HHS's recent extension of the opioid public health emergency and urges our leaders to protect Americans from very serious threats to mental and behavioral health, including the alarmingly high rates of opioid use, Fentanyl overdoses and suicides, as well as the devastating, well documented impact of the mental health crisis among our nation's youth.

Given the gravity of these challenges, we urge our nation's leaders to continue forward momentum, by retaining and bolstering prevention, treatment and recovery for mental health and SUDs in a bipartisan fashion. Wasting prior investments and stalling progress on our shared goals is not in anyone's best interest.

The national member organizations of the MHLG stand ready to be a resource on federal grant programs and services, at SAMHSA and other federal agencies, which provide essential support to states and communities and facilitate access to mental health and SUD care.

The Mental Health Liaison Group (MHLG) is a coalition of over 100 national organizations representing people with mental health conditions and substance use disorders, family members, mental health and addiction providers, advocates and other stakeholders that is committed to strengthening Americans' access to mental health and substance use disorder care.