

February 28, 2017

The Honorable Tim Murphy
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Derek Kilmer
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Murphy and Kilmer,

The undersigned national organizations are writing to thank you for introducing the *Mental Health and Substance Abuse Treatment Accessibility Act of 2017*. We strongly support your bill which seeks to overcome the challenges of constructing and modifying facilities and to provide support to both inpatient and community based care.

Acute psychiatric care and substance use treatment facilities are an integral component of community-based care for persons with mental disorders and addictions. These facilities, which include general hospital psychiatric units, freestanding psychiatric hospitals, and mental health and substance use centers, are the front line against this behavioral health crisis. Yet, communities across the nation are experiencing a shortage of treatment capacity to provide acute care. The Treatment Advocacy Center asserts that communities should have a capacity of 40-60 inpatient beds per 100,000 residents. The national average currently is 11.7 beds per 100,000.

The effort to rebuild our national treatment infrastructure faces challenges to constructing and upgrading these facilities. The concern with the cost of constructing and/or modifying an existing facility is daunting. There are currently no federal programs to assist with hospital construction.

We would urge Congress to pass *Mental Health and Substance Abuse Treatment Accessibility Act of 2017*, which provides loans and loan guarantees on favorable yet responsible terms to qualifying psychiatric and substance use facilities. The bill establishes a fund to hold and eventually make available any money generated from the loan and loan grantees to expand community based outpatient care. The goal of the legislation is the right step, in the right direction, at the right time to address the capacity to provide acute mental health and substance use care.

We thank you for your leadership and stand ready to work with you and Congress on the goal of modernizing our infrastructure and improving behavioral health care in America. Please contact Nancy Trenti at 202/393-6700 ext. 103 or (email nancy@naphs.org) with comments and questions.

Thank you for your consideration of our views.

Sincerely,

American Art Therapy Association
American Dance Therapy Association
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
American Psychiatric Association

Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare
Clinical Social Work Association
Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance
Emergency Nurses Association
Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice
National Alliance on Mental Illness
National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems
National Association for Rural Mental Health
National Association of Social Workers
National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors (NASMHPD)
National Health Care for the Homeless Council
National Register of Health Service Psychologists
Schizophrenia and Related Disorders Alliance of America
The Trevor Project