

April 25, 2018

The Honorable Roy Blunt  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human  
Services, Education & Related Agencies  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human  
Services, Education & Related Agencies  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray:

As organizations that care deeply about the health and well-being of our nation's children, we write to thank you for allocating \$10,000,000 in funding in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 Omnibus bill for the pediatric mental health care access grants that were authorized in the *21<sup>st</sup> Century Cures Act*. As you begin work on the FY 2019 appropriations process, we respectfully request that the FY 2019 Labor, HHS, Education (LHHS) appropriations bill include \$10,000,000 for this important initiative.

Research shows pervasive shortages of child and adolescent mental/behavioral health specialists throughout the US. To reduce this severe access barrier, integrating mental health and primary care has been shown to substantially expand access to mental health care, improve health and functional outcomes, increase satisfaction with care, and achieve cost savings. For children, integrating mental health into primary care settings simply makes sense. It is a setting where families regularly obtain care for their children and where identification, initial assessment, and treatment of medical and mental and behavioral health conditions can occur.

Funding for pediatric mental health care access grants will expand access to behavioral health services in pediatric primary care settings by supporting the development and maintenance of pediatric mental health care telehealth access programs. Behavioral health integration programs such as the Child Psychiatry Access Programs (CPAPs) operate in nearly 30 states and represent successful models for the integration of children's mental health into primary care. These programs support primary care providers in terms of continuing education, specialty mental health referral and behavioral health resource networking, social work co-location, and phone consultation.

Expanding the capacity of pediatric primary care providers to deliver behavioral health through mental and behavioral health consultation programs is one way to maximize a limited subspecialty workforce and to help ensure more children with emerging or diagnosed mental health disorders receive early and continuous treatment. The human and economic toll of inadequately addressing childhood mental health problems is significant. Untreated mental health disorders lead to higher rates of family dysfunction, poor school performance and drop-outs, juvenile incarceration, substance use, unemployment, and suicide. In 2015, more than 5,000 young people between the ages of 10 and 24 died by suicide, making it the second leading cause of death in this age group.

As you prepare the FY 19 LHHS appropriations bill, we respectfully request that you continue to fund this program at \$10,000,000. Thank you for your consideration. Our organizations are grateful to you for your commitment to the mental health and well-being of children.

Sincerely,

**National Organizations**

AIDS Alliance for Women, Infants, Children, Youth & Families  
American Academy of Pediatrics  
American Association for Geriatric Psychiatry  
American Association for Psychoanalysis in Clinical Social Work  
American Association of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry  
American Association on Health and Disability  
American Psychiatric Association  
American Muslim Health Professionals  
Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies  
Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs  
Campaign for Trauma-Informed Policy and Practice  
Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder  
Children's Hospital Association  
College of Psychiatric and Neurologic Pharmacists (CPNP)  
Community Catalyst  
Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance  
Eating Disorders Coalition  
Families USA  
Family Voices  
Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice  
Lakeshore Foundation  
Mental Health America  
MomsRising  
NAMI, National Alliance on Mental Illness  
National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health  
National Association for Children's Behavioral Health  
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners  
National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors  
National Health Law Program  
National Network of Child Psychiatry Access Programs  
School-Based Health Alliance  
Tricare for Kids Coalition  
United Way Worldwide  
ZERO TO THREE

**State Organizations**

**Arizona**

Infant Toddler Mental Health Coalition of Arizona

**California**

American Academy of Pediatrics, CA Chapter 3

**Colorado**

Colorado Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Society  
AAP Colorado

**Connecticut**

Connecticut Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

**Delaware**

Delaware Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

**Florida**

Florida Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, Inc.

**Idaho**

Aim Early Idaho  
Idaho Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

**Illinois**

Illinois Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

**Kansas**

Kansas Appleseed  
Children's Alliance of Kansas  
Health Reform Resource Project

**Kentucky**

Children's Alliance of Kentucky

**Massachusetts**

Massachusetts Child Psychiatry Program

**Minnesota**

Minnesota Psychiatric Society  
Minnesota Society of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

**Missouri**

Family Care Health Centers  
Missouri Alliance for Children and Families  
St. Louis Center for Family Development  
Catholic Charities of St. Louis

**New Hampshire**

NH Children's Behavioral Health Collaborative

**New Jersey**

NJ Association of Mental Health and Addiction Agencies

**New York**

American Academy of Pediatrics New York State, Chapter 1

American Academy of Pediatrics New York State, Chapter 2

American Academy of Pediatrics New York State, Chapter 3

**Oklahoma**

Oklahoma Association for Infant Mental Health

**Oregon**

Oregon Pediatric Society

**Rhode Island**

Rhode Island KIDS COUNT

**Tennessee**

Tennessee Justice Center

**Texas**

Texas Pediatric Society

**Vermont**

Voices for Vermont's Children

**Virginia**

Voices for Virginia's Children

**West Virginia**

West Virginia Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

West Virginia Child Care Association

**Wisconsin**

Children's Hospital of Wisconsin

Wisconsin Child Psychiatry Consultation Program (CPCP)