October 27, 2015

The Honorable Lamar Alexander The Honorable Patty Murray

Chairman Ranking Member

Health, Education, Labor, and Health, Education, Labor, and

Pensions Committee Pensions Committee

U.S. Senate U.S. Senate

Washington, DC 20510 Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Alexander and Murray:

The Mental Health Liaison Group (MHLG)—a coalition of national organizations representing mental health consumers and patients, family members, advocates, professionals and providers—is writing to urge your committee to take up comprehensive mental health system reform legislation introduced by Senators Bill Cassidy and Chris Murphy, S. 1945, the “Mental Health Reform Act of 2015.”

Doing so would continue the committee’s important work in this area, following its approval of S. 1893, your legislation to reauthorize and improve the Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act, the National Child Traumatic Stress Initiative, and other programs aimed at increasing awareness, prevention, and early identification of mental health conditions. We support enactment of S. 1893, but also believe more comprehensive reforms are needed to improve our nation’s failing mental health service delivery system.

The Cassidy-Murphy legislation would expand Americans’ access to inpatient psychiatric services; improve coordination between federal agencies; foster integration of physical and mental health services delivery; promote appropriate, effective sharing of individuals’ mental health treatment information; establish new grant programs for early intervention, support preventive services; and bolster enforcement of the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act. It is urgent that Congress enact legislation like S. 1945 soon, in order to provide more effective prevention and treatment measures, more timely access, and improve the continuity of care within our mental health system.

We applaud you for your continued bipartisanship on mental health policy issues, and we pledge to continue working with you to advance mental health reform efforts through the Senate.

Sincerely,

American Association for Geriatric Psychiatry

American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy

American Association of Pastoral Counselors

Page 2, Alexander and Murray

American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP) \*

American Dance Therapy Association

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

American Group Psychotherapy Association

American Occupational Therapy Association

American Orthopsychiatric Association

American Psychiatric Association

American Psychological Association

Anxiety and Depression Association of America

Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare

Clinical Social Work Association

Clinical Social Work Guild

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance

Emergency Nurses Association

Mental Health America

National Alliance on Mental Illness

National Alliance to End Homelessness

National Association for Children’s Behavioral Health

National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders, Inc. - ANAD

National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems

National Association of School Psychologists

National Association of Social Workers

National Association of State Directors of Special Education

National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors

National Council for Behavioral Health

National League for Nursing

NHMH - No Health without Mental Health

School Social Work Association of America

State of Connecticut Office of the Healthcare Advocate \*

The Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy, and Action

The National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health

The Watershed Addiction Treatment Programs, Inc. \*

Tourette Association of America

Treatment Communities of America

\*not a MHLG member