

# Mental Health Liaison Group

December 9, 2009

The Honorable Patrick J. Kennedy  
407 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tim Murphy  
322 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Kennedy and Murphy:

The undersigned organizations in the Mental Health Liaison Group (MHLG) are writing to express our support for the Establishing a Network of Health-Advancing National Centers of Excellence for Depression (ENHANCED) Act of 2009, H.R. 4204. We commend you for introducing legislation establishing national centers of excellence for the treatment of depressive and bipolar disorders.

According to the National Institutes of Health, most people with mood disorders can be effectively treated via medication, psychotherapy or combined treatment. However, according to the Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (2009), one-third of those suffering from mood disorder (4.8 million) do not receive treatment, either because they cannot afford it, do not believe it is needed, are afraid of societal judgment or do not know where to go for services. Additionally, identification of depression and bipolar disorder are missed approximately 50 percent of the time (Journal of the American Board of Family Medicine, 2007), and this diagnostic gap yields adverse outcomes.

Your legislation targets these problems by expanding depression centers of excellence with the goal of increasing access to the most appropriate and evidence-based depression care and developing and disseminating evidence-based treatment standards to improve accurate and timely diagnosis of depression and bipolar disorders. Additionally, the ENHANCED Act will create a national database for large-sample effectiveness studies and create a repository of evidence-based interventions and programs for depression and bipolar disorders, as well as utilize the network of centers as an ongoing national resource for public and professional education and training, with the goal of advancing knowledge and eradicating stigma of these mental disorders.

The ENHANCED Act offers a substantial contribution towards closing the gap between knowledge and practice of effective mental health treatments. We look forward to working with you to ensure this legislation is a key component in today's evolving health care system.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry  
American Art Therapy Association  
American Association for Geriatric Psychiatry  
American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy

National organizations representing consumers, family members, advocates, professionals and providers  
c/o Peter Newbould, American Psychological Association Practice Organization, 750 First Street, NE, Washington, DC 20002

American Association of Pastoral Counselors  
American Counseling Association  
American Group Psychotherapy Association  
American Mental Health Counselors Association  
American Psychiatric Association  
American Psychological Association  
American Psychotherapy Association  
Anxiety Disorders Association of America  
Association for the Advancement of Psychology  
Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare  
Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness  
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law  
Center for Clinical Social Work  
Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder  
Child Welfare League of America  
Clinical Social Work Association  
Clinical Social Work Guild 49, OPEIU  
Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance  
Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy & Action  
Mental Health America  
National Alliance on Mental Illness  
National Association for Children's Behavioral Health  
National Association for Rural Mental Health  
National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders -- ANAD  
National Association of Mental Health Planning & Advisory Councils  
National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems  
National Association of Social Workers  
National Coalition of Mental Health Professionals and Consumers, Inc.  
National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare  
National Disability Rights Network  
National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health  
National Foundation for Mental Health  
Tourette Syndrome Association  
U.S. Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association