April 29, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Senate Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
S-230 U.S. Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
S-221 U.S. Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House  
U.S. House of Representatives  
H-232, U.S. Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
H-204, U.S. Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Schumer, Speaker Pelosi, and Minority Leader McCarthy:

As you negotiate the next stimulus package to mitigate the health and economic effects of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, we request that you provide emergency funding to mental health disorder and addiction treatment providers across the country. Many organizations that primarily treat individuals with mental health and/or substance use disorders (collectively, behavioral health organizations or “BHOs”) are at risk of closing their doors as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The immediate and long-term effects of this cannot be overstated as millions of Americans rely on BHOs to address their mental health and substance use disorder treatment needs. As such, we request that you provide at least $38.5 billion in emergency funding to BHOs across the country that utilize evidence-based practices, with a significant portion of these emergency funds set aside for BHOs enrolled in Medicaid and provide care to underserved groups, or those who otherwise lack coverage for needed behavioral and mental health care.

Millions of individuals, children, and families across the country struggle with mental illness or addiction each and every day. According to the 2018 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, nearly 1 in 5 adults, over 47 million people, reported struggling with mental illness, and over 10 million reported suicidal thoughts.1 These numbers are particularly concerning among the nation’s youth. 1 in 7 youth aged 12 to 17, or 3.5 million adolescents, reported experiencing a major depressive episode in 2018, and record numbers of adolescents have attempted or

considered suicide in recent years. In addition to age disparities, it has been found that people of color, people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, and people living in rural communities are less likely to have access to mental health care and more likely to receive lower quality care. Further, over 20 million Americans are living with substance use disorder, including 2 million who have opioid use disorder.

The numbers of Americans struggling with mental illness will only continue to grow as families and individuals face the emotional and economic repercussions of the pandemic. A recent poll found that the pandemic and its resultant social and economic impacts are already taking a heavy toll on Americans’ mental health. 45 percent of respondents reported that the pandemic is negatively affecting their mental health, up from 32 percent just a month prior. Experts have even suggested that long-term social distancing from friends, loved ones, and a departure from routine may have both short- and long-term psychological effects. This, compounded with increasing financial strain and underlying disparities in mental health care access and quality of care, could have dire consequences. Anecdotal reports have indicated that rates of consumption of alcohol and other addictive substances are on the rise. Furthermore, social distancing measures have created barriers to accessing treatment, which has only been exacerbated by a scarcity of available providers as they either fall ill or become overloaded with patients.

BHOs are crucial to the provision of behavioral health care to Americans across the country who rely on them for a variety of services, but are being burdened by the pandemic. BHOs may provide counseling services to individuals, families, and children struggling with depression, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, and countless other mental illnesses. Additionally, licensed practitioners at BHOs may provide lifesaving medication assisted treatment to individuals with opioid and other substance use disorders. Without this medical treatment, patients in recovery are

---

2 Ibid.
at higher risk for relapse, overdose, or overdose related death.\textsuperscript{9} These services will become all the more important as COVID-19 continues to spread and the need for mental health disorder and addiction treatment services grows. However, because of the health and economic impacts of the pandemic and the growing number of patients, many BHOs are at risk of closing their doors. Some BHOs have projected nearly $40 billion in lost revenue as a direct result of increased staff overtime to meet patient need, increased need for PPE, and the implementation of telehealth services.\textsuperscript{10} The impact of such a shortfall would be significant, particularly as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to disrupt the lives of all Americans.

BHOs have not been sufficiently included in response efforts to date. Congress has passed four stimulus packages to bolster the nation’s response to COVID-19. However, none have addressed the growing challenge to and need for BHOs. With a growing number of Americans in need of behavioral health services and many BHOs at risk of closing, the nation is headed towards another public health crisis. To avert another large-scale public health crisis, we must pass a stimulus package that prioritizes the financial security of these vital health care providers and the health of millions of Americans. As such, we respectfully request that at least $38.5 billion in emergency aid is provided to BHOs that can meet at least one of the following three criteria: accredited by an independent, national accrediting organization or receive state or tribal funding or qualify as community mental health centers as defined in Section 1913(c) of the \textit{Public Health Service Act}. This will allow these critical mental health and addiction treatment providers to keep their doors open and continue providing crucial treatment to Americans during these trying times. We are also supportive of efforts, led by our colleagues, to boost critical funding at the Department of Health and Human Services for mental and behavioral health initiatives, including the Community Mental Health Services Block Grant, the National Child Traumatic Stress Network, and other Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), Indian Health Service (IHS), and Health Resources and Services Administration programs, as well as specific programs that support the mental and behavioral health of American Indian and Alaska Native populations like the SAMHSA Tribal Behavioral Health Grants, and funding for the Mental Health and Alcohol & Substance Abuse line items in the IHS budget.

We thank you for your attention to this matter and look forward to working together to ensure that any economic stimulus package provides much needed relief for our nation’s BHOs.

\textbf{Sincerely,}

\textsuperscript{9} Food and Drug Administration, “Information about Medication Assisted Treatment,” https://www.fda.gov/drugs/information-drug-class/information-about-medication-assisted-treatment-mat
\textsuperscript{10} American Society of Addiction Medicine, “$38.5 Billion Request to Congress for Emergency Funding to Avert Collapse of Behavioral Health Organizations Nationwide,” April 7, 2020, https://www.asam.org/docs/default-source/advocacy/letters-and-comments/request-to-congress-for-emergency-funding8b95339472bc604ca5b7ff000030b21a.pdf?sfvrsn=82953c2_2
Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator

Joseph P. Kennedy, III
Member of Congress

Edward J. Markey
United States Senator

Doris Matsui
Member of Congress

Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator

Paul D. Tonko
Member of Congress

Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator

John Katko
Member of Congress

Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator

Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator

Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator

Bernard Sanders
United States Senator

Cory A. Booker
United States Senator

Kamala D. Harris
United States Senator

Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator

Tim Kaine
United States Senator

Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator

Tina Smith
United States Senator
Sherrod Brown  
United States Senator

Chris Van Hollen  
United States Senator

Catherine Cortez Masto  
United States Senator

Tom Udall  
United States Senator

Gary C. Peters  
United States Senator

Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator

Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator

Jack Reed  
United States Senator

Martin Heinrich  
United States Senator

Anna G. Eshoo  
Member of Congress

Bill Foster  
Member of Congress

James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress

Debbie Dingell  
Member of Congress

David Trone  
Member of Congress

Brian Fitzpatrick  
Member of Congress

Chellie Pingree  
Member of Congress

Lucy McBath  
Member of Congress

Lauren Underwood  
Member of Congress

Jahana Hayes  
Member of Congress

Scott Peters  
Member of Congress

Max Rose  
Member of Congress
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grace F. Napolitano</td>
<td>Eleanor Holmes Norton</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sean Patrick Maloney</td>
<td>Tim Ryan</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Gettman</td>
<td>Judy Chu</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheila Jackson Lee</td>
<td>Ann McLane Kuster</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lori Trahan</td>
<td>Jan Schakowsky</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albio Sires</td>
<td>Darren Soto</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danny K. Davis</td>
<td>Wm. Lacy Clay</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bradley S. Schneider</td>
<td>Eddie Bernice Johnson</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeff Van Drew</td>
<td>Kathleen M. Rice</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conor Lamb</td>
<td>Stephen F. Lynch</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William R. Keating</td>
<td>Sanford D. Bishop, Jr,</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yvette D. Clarke</td>
<td>Mark Pocan</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Party</td>
<td>State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamie Raskin</td>
<td>Democratic</td>
<td>MD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joe Courtney</td>
<td>Democratic</td>
<td>CT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pramila Jayapal</td>
<td>Democratic</td>
<td>WA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marcia L. Fudge</td>
<td>Democratic</td>
<td>OH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John B. Larson</td>
<td>Democratic</td>
<td>CT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raúl M. Grijalva</td>
<td>Democratic</td>
<td>AZ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seth Moulton</td>
<td>Democratic</td>
<td>MA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Josh Gottheimer</td>
<td>Democratic</td>
<td>NJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dave Loebsack</td>
<td>Democratic</td>
<td>IA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>André Carson</td>
<td>Democratic</td>
<td>IN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheri Bustos</td>
<td>Democratic</td>
<td>IL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr.</td>
<td>Democratic</td>
<td>CA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>