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December 12, 2013

The Honorable Tim Murphy
Chairman
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations
Committee on Energy and Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Murphy:

On behalf of the American Psychiatric Association (APA), the medical specialty society representing more than 33,000 psychiatric physicians and their patients, we thank you for introducing a comprehensive legislative package calling for significant reforms to a broken public health delivery system.

Mental illness is widely prevalent in the United States. 60 million Americans live with a diagnosable psychiatric or substance use disorder, and 13 million Americans live with a serious or severe psychiatric disorder. Despite recent gains achieved in medical research and public awareness, managing psychiatric and substance use disorders remains a challenging task for physicians and patients alike, unnecessarily complicated by wide-ranging factors that include fragmented delivery and reimbursement systems, regulatory barriers, workforce shortages, and the enduring stigma surrounding mental health. APA appreciates the emphasis you place in this legislation on the provision of evidence-based psychiatric and substance use services, the integration of those services with other health care delivery systems, and the promotion of robust research into serious mental illness.

APA is pleased that you have included the reauthorization of the Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act and the Mentally Ill Offender Treatment and Crime Reduction Act, the Excellence in Mental Health Act, the Behavioral Health Information Technology Extension Act, as well as the enhanced support for the RAISE Early Treatment Program, among other notable reforms contained in this legislation. APA supports these provisions and thanks you for your dedication to improve the lives of millions of Americans with mental illness and their families.

The leadership of the APA looks forward to working with you to improve upon this legislation and continue the dialogue on these vital issues in the 113th Congress.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey Lieberman, M.D.
President



Saul Levin, M.D., M.P.A.
C.E.O. and Medical Director

