



April 14, 2015

The Honorable Tim Murphy
2332 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Murphy:

On behalf of Children's National Health System (Children's National), I write in support of your efforts to advance the nation's mental health system through the Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act. This legislation includes critical protections for individuals suffering from mental illness and their families.

Children's National, based in Washington, DC, has been serving the nation's children since 1870. Children's National's hospital is Magnet® designated and is consistently ranked among the top pediatric hospitals by U.S. News & World Report and the Leapfrog Group. Home to the Children's Research Institute and the Sheikh Zayed Institute for Pediatric Surgical Innovation, Children's National is one of the top National Institutes of Health (NIH)-funded pediatric institutions in the United States. With a community-based pediatric network, eight regional outpatient centers, an ambulatory surgery center, two emergency rooms, an acute care hospital and collaborations throughout the region, Children's National is recognized for its expertise and innovation in pediatric care and as an advocate for all children.

The Division of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Children's National offers assessment, diagnosis and care for children and teens with behavioral, emotional and developmental disorders. Every year, our specialists help thousands of children and teens through day treatment programs, outpatient assistance, inpatient care and our emergency psychiatric services. Our outpatient service evaluates approximately 1,000 patients annually, with more than 5,000 visits each year. The inpatient unit includes a 12-bed child unit and a 14-bed adolescent unit. Both units establish a safe setting where our team provides crisis intervention and stabilization. The Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine team is also actively involved in research and training to discover effective treatment therapies and improve patient care and health outcomes.

A critical component of improving children's mental health is boosting the child and adolescent psychiatry workforce through a loan relief program. Mental illness impacts one in five of America's young people. Estimates place the need of Child and Adolescent Psychiatrists (CAPs) at 30,000, yet the current number of these professionals in the United States is just over 8,000. Wait times to see a professional for services often average over seven weeks. Ensuring appropriate numbers of CAPs is a critical component in improving our nation's mental health system.

Including CAPs as eligible professionals under the National Health Service Corps (NHSC) program can encourage more medical students to pursue this specialty and thus boost the

workforce. This can be achieved by: (1) clarifying definitions to cover the subspecialty of child and adolescent psychiatry; (2) specifically listing children as an underserved population for needed mental health services; and (3) ensuring that CAP training sites and programs meet eligibility criteria, just as general psychiatry and other graduate programs of behavioral and mental health programs currently do.

Children's National thanks you again for your leadership on this very important issue. We look forward to working with you to advance your legislation.

Sincerely,

Paramjit T. Joshi, MD
Endowed Professor & Chair
Department of Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences
Children's National Health System