



Westside
Los Angeles

March 17, 2014

The Honorable Tim Murphy
Chairman, Oversight & Investigations Subcommittee
United States House of Representatives
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Murphy:

On Behalf of NAMI Westside Los Angeles, the largest family and consumer grassroots organization dedicated to mental health, we write to express our support of HR 3717, the "Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act" legislation. We urge Congress to pass this bill. Not only does this legislation include critical provisions to improve care for people with *serious mental illnesses*, it also helps families provide better care and protection for their loved ones.

NAMI-Westside LA strongly supports all provisions in this bill and is especially appreciative that it.

- Creates exemptions in HIPAA and FERPA that will help families access information necessary to provide care to loved ones
- Returns the Protection and Advocacy for Individuals with Mental Illness (PAIMI/P&A) to its original focus of working to improve care for the most seriously mentally ill
- Reorients SAMHSA/CMHS so they focus more resources on the most seriously mentally ill rather than the highest functioning
- Increases NIMH funding so that they can discover the causes and develop new treatments for serious mental illnesses
- Funds pilot Assisted Outpatient Treatment Programs proven to reduce homelessness, hospitalization, arrest and incarceration of the most seriously mentally ill
- Funds Mental Health Courts so more people with serious mental illnesses go to treatment rather than to jail and prison
- Funds Telepsychiatry in rural communities so those without in-person access to care can still receive care
- Creates an undersecretary for mental health within HHS to help reorient spending so the most seriously mentally ill are prioritized rather than offloaded to jails, prisons and shelters

We are grateful to you for caring about people with serious mental illnesses and supporting their families. Thank you for your exceptional leadership.

Sincerely,

Sylvia Thompson, President
NAMI Westside Los Angeles

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