

# **NAPHS Commends Rep. Tim Murphy for Bipartisan Reintroduction of Legislation to Address the Nation's Mental Health Emergency**

WASHINGTON, June 5, 2015 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- The following is a statement from **Mark Covall, President and CEO, National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems (NAPHS)**:

There is a mental health emergency in the United States, and lives are at stake.

Yesterday House Energy and Commerce Oversight Subcommittee Chairman Rep. Tim Murphy (R-PA) and Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX) re-introduced comprehensive legislation (*Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act, H.R. 2646*) to improve America's system for helping Americans facing serious mental and addictive disorders.

Headlines on suicides, overdoses, and long waits for psychiatric and addiction treatment demonstrate the sad truth that every day millions of Americans face unnecessary barriers to getting the right services at the right time. Ten million American adults report having serious mental illnesses such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder, yet studies show that 40% of those with serious mental illness did not receive any mental health services in the past year.

Rep. Murphy's comprehensive approach to reform offers a clear path to save lives, communities, and money.

As an association representing behavioral healthcare organizations and professionals, the National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems (NAPHS) applauds Rep. Murphy for his leadership in answering the call for action. We thank Rep. Murphy and Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX) and other cosponsors for their support and for demonstrating that achieving overall health of mind and body is a bipartisan goal. The *Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act* provides specific solutions to some of the most challenging issues we face.

For example, the legislation would change Medicaid policy (the "Institutions for Mental Disease" exclusion) that currently prevents adults from accessing short-term, acute care in psychiatric hospitals. It would also strengthen mental health and addiction parity.

The bill would improve care by promoting quality and integration. Health information technology incentives would become available to behavioral health organizations to encourage improved sharing of medical information.

The bill would also create a new Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders within the Department of Health and Human Services to facilitate government-wide coordination and focus on the needs of the most seriously ill.

As Congress actively looks for ways to address the mental health and addiction challenges their communities face, Rep. Murphy has laid out a roadmap for congressional action to address gaps and inequalities.

Mental and addictive disorders are illnesses that need to be treated in the same manner as other medical conditions. Developing policies to support that goal is the right thing to do, and the time for action is now.

We look forward to working with all members of Congress and the Administration to make comprehensive mental health reform a reality.

The National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems advocates for behavioral health and represents provider systems that are committed to the delivery of responsive, accountable, and clinically effective prevention, treatment, and care for children, adolescents, adults, and older adults with mental and substance use disorders. Its members are behavioral healthcare provider organizations that own or manage more than 800 specialty psychiatric hospitals, general hospital psychiatric and addiction treatment units and behavioral healthcare divisions, residential treatment facilities, youth services organizations, and extensive outpatient networks. The association was founded in 1933.

SOURCE National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems (NAPHS)

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