

December 11, 2013

The Honorable Tim Murphy
U.S. House of Representatives
2332 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Murphy,

On behalf of the more than 700 member organizations of the National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems (NAPHS), I am writing to thank you for your year-long effort in the aftermath of the Sandy Hook tragedy to thoughtfully review the status of the mental health and substance use system in this country.

We applaud the introduction this week of your comprehensive mental health and substance use legislation to address gaps in the mental health and addiction system as well as to set a future course for behavioral health policy in America. As a nation, we need to look forward to better deal with mental and addictive disorders so that persons living with these conditions can get the right treatment, at the right time, and in the right setting.

I know your bill doesn't shy away from addressing some of the tough challenges we must face as a nation as we work to improve the behavioral health system. We commend you for that effort because without discussing these challenges we will not be able to take advantage of the opportunities ahead.

Mental illnesses are just like any other illnesses and need to be treated in the same manner as other medical conditions. Because mental health is integral to overall health, we cannot just focus on the behavioral health system (both public and private); we also need to reach out to the broader healthcare community to integrate mental health and addiction into the overall healthcare system.

During this past year, you have reached out to the different stakeholders, including NAPHS, to better understand the numerous perspectives in this field.

We greatly appreciate your outreach and we look forward to working with you, Congress, and the Administration to ensure that people who need mental health and substance use services have timely access to the most cost-effective, highest quality services.

Sincerely,



Mark Covall
President and CEO