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August 3, 2015

The Honorable Bill Cassidy
703 Hart Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chris Murphy
303 Hart Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Cassidy and Murphy:

On behalf of the American Psychological Association (APA) and American Psychological Association Practice Organization (APAPO), we are writing to express our support for the Mental Health Reform Act of 2015.

The APA is the largest scientific and professional organization representing psychology in the United States and the world's largest association of psychologists, with more than 122,500 researchers, educators, clinicians, consultants and students. The APAPO is a companion organization to the APA, and is dedicated to advancing the practice of psychology and promoting the interests of psychologists who practice in diverse settings.

We applaud your bipartisan leadership on legislation to improve our nation's mental health system. As you well know, children and adults living with an undiagnosed or untreated mental health disorder often meet with serious adverse outcomes, including school failure, homelessness, contact with law enforcement, and suicide. The Mental Health Reform Act of 2015 takes meaningful steps toward improving the host of adverse consequences associated with untreated mental disorders.

Furthermore, the Mental Health Reform Act of 2015 addresses a myriad of challenges faced by a fragmented mental health system which disrupts patients' access to effective and evidence-based treatments. We share your vision for creating a service system which efficiently and effectively assists patients, their providers, families and caregivers to access timely and quality care. We are grateful for the inclusion of the Minority Fellowship Program in the bill. Highly qualified and culturally competent mental health and substance abuse professionals are key to eliminating health disparities and improving health care outcomes for minority populations and underserved communities. We are pleased that the legislation renews critical programs under the jurisdiction of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, supports research at the National Institute of Mental Health, and promotes an understanding of the importance of the role of confidentiality in treatment, (e.g., patient's protected health information under the HIPAA federal health care privacy law), while valuing a family caregiver's role in advancing a patient's mental health and assisting in care, particularly when the patient with a serious mental illness is incapacitated. .

Given the shortage of mental health professionals trained to work in integrated primary care settings, we commend you for reauthorizing the Health Resources and Services Administration's Mental and Behavioral Health Education and Training Grant Programs (MBHET), including the Graduate

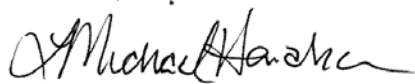
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Psychology Education Program. We look forward to working with you on these critical workforce provisions to ensure the MBHET Grant Programs maintain priority for meeting the needs of vulnerable populations, including children, victims of abuse and trauma, older adults and those with chronic illnesses, as well as effectively supporting the training of the broad continuum of the behavioral health workforce, including health service psychology.

Your commitment to improving our nation's mental health system is commendable, and we thank you for undertaking such a vital goal. We believe the Mental Health Reform Act of 2015 makes significant strides to address our fragmented mental health system and improve outcomes for children and adults with a serious mental illness, and we look forward to working with you, your colleagues on the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, and staff to help advance the bill through the legislative process.

Sincerely,



Michael L. Honaker, Ph.D.
Deputy Chief Executive Officer



Katherine C. Nordal, Ph.D.
Executive Director for Professional Practice