

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 20, 2017

The Honorable Mick Mulvaney
Director
The Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Director Mulvaney,

We respectfully request that you allocate robust funding in the Fiscal Year 2019 budget request for programs that address mental health, suicide prevention, and substance use disorders. According to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), the estimated annual prevalence of mental illness was 17.9% of adults age 18 and older in 2015. This number excludes substance use disorders, of which 8.4% of adults had in 2015. A serious mental illness (SMI) is defined as first having a mental illness and second, the illness substantially interferes with at least one major life activity. The estimated annual prevalence for serious mental illness was 4% for adults age 18 and older in 2015. The perceived unmet need for mental health treatment for those over 18 in 2015 for individuals with mental illness was 20.3% and 38.2% for individuals with serious mental illness.

Additionally, about 40% of youth between ages 13 to 17 have experienced a behavioral health problem before reaching seventh grade. Suicide is the third leading cause of death among adolescents ages 15 to 24, and the suicide rate was 14.2 per 1,000 in 2015. About 1.3 million youth ages 12 to 17, or 5%, had a substance use disorder in 2014.

As you know, several provisions of the Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act were included in the 21st Century Cures Act (P.L. 144-255). The Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act represents a multi-year and bipartisan effort to reform the mental health system. We are committed to building better futures for individuals and families affected by mental illness and serious mental illness. Unfortunately, stories of families who have suffered attempting to find care for a loved one are all too common. The opioid crisis has exacerbated and exhausted the attempt to find solutions on mental health and substance use disorders.

We strongly support investments in research, prevention, and treatment programs that will reach populations in need and increase coordination across the federal government. Promoting evidence-based programs at the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) will help those with mental illness rather than hinder them. Encouraging innovation and evidence-based treatment, allowing states to target local needs, jail and prison diversion,

crisis response systems, and adult and youth suicide prevention are valuable priorities that can help to push the mental health system out of crisis.

We are encouraged that the FY18 President's Budget for SAMHSA recognized the need to fight against the opioid epidemic, increase the focus on SMI through Assertive Community Treatment, and efforts to continue support for suicide prevention programs. We ask that you prioritize robust funding for programs that focus on mental illness, substance use disorder, and suicide prevention. We look forward to your response and partnering with you on this critical issue.

Sincerely,



Marcy Kaptur
Member of Congress



Jaime Herrera Beutler
Member of Congress



Steven M. Palazzo
Member of Congress



Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress



Kyrsten Sinema
Member of Congress



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