



January 3, 2017

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Majority Leader
S-230, The Capitol
United State Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker of the House
H-232, The Capitol
United States Congress
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Democratic Leader
S-221, The Capitol
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Democratic Leader
H-204, The Capitol
United States Congress
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Leader McConnell, Leader Schumer, Speaker Ryan and Leader Pelosi,

On behalf of the American Society of Addiction Medicine, the American Psychiatric Association, the American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry, and the American Osteopathic Academy of Addiction Medicine, we thank you for your leadership regarding the recently enacted *21st Century Cures Act*, which contained important mental health and substance use disorder reforms as well as critical funds to address the opioid misuse and overdose epidemic. We are writing to ask that as Congress contemplates health insurance market reforms, any changes to the healthcare system preserve access to appropriate services and programs for individuals and families struggling with addiction and mental illness.

The American Psychiatric Association (APA) is a national medical specialty society representing more than 36,500 physician members who specialize in the diagnosis, treatment, prevention, and research of mental illnesses, including substance use disorders.

The American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) is a professional society representing more than 4,300 physicians, clinicians, and associated professionals in the field of addiction medicine. ASAM is dedicated to increasing access and improving the quality of addiction treatment, educating physicians and the public, supporting research and prevention, and promoting the appropriate role of physicians in the care of patients with addiction.

The American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry (AAAP) is a national professional organization composed of psychiatrists, faculty, medical students, residents and fellows, non-psychiatrists and related health professionals, caring for those with substance use disorders and co-occurring mental disorders through education and training health professionals, influencing and promoting excellence in practice, policy, and prevention. AAAP is the lead organization of a coalition of national professional organizations

for two SAMHSA-funded grants—Providers’ Clinical Support System for Opioid Therapies and Providers’ Clinical Support System for Medication Assisted Treatment, addressing the opioid use disorder epidemic.

The American Osteopathic Association of Addiction Medicine (AOAAM) is the subspecialty of the American Osteopathic Association (AOA) organization that represents the interests of osteopathic physicians involved in the treatment of alcoholism and substance use disorder. The osteopathic profession makes up 8% of physicians in the U.S., however, because of the emphasis on family practice, it is estimated 20% of primary care in this country is delivered by osteopathic physicians.

In the face of the opioid overdose and suicide epidemics, equitable access to a full continuum of mental health and substance use disorder treatment services, including medications to treat addiction and mental illness, must be an essential component of healthcare coverage. It is also critical that addiction and mental illness be covered on par with other medical conditions, ensuring full implementation of parity and patient safeguards consistent with the Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008, and extensions of this law, and expanded coverage provided, under the Affordable Care Act

Ensuring Americans have access to addiction and mental health treatment is not only the right thing to do – it’s the cost-effective thing to do, yielding a return on investment that will benefit employers and our economy. For example, according to the [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#), every dollar spent on the treatment of mental illness results in \$3 - \$5 in new economic contributions and years of healthy life. In addition, the recent [Surgeon General Report on Alcohol, Drugs and Health](#) found that every \$1 spent on addiction treatment saves \$4 in health care costs and \$7 in criminal justice costs.

We look forward to working with you to ensure that recent gains made toward improving access to addiction and mental health treatment will be preserved and enhanced as reforms are considered for both the health insurance market and Medicaid program in the next Congress.

Sincerely,



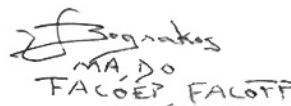
R. Jeffrey Goldsmith, MD, DLFAPA, DFASAM
President, American Society of Addiction Medicine



Maria A. Oquendo, MD, PhD
President, American Psychiatric Association



John A. Renner, MD
President, American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry



William Bograkos, DO, FACOEP, FACOPF
President, American Osteopathic Academy of
Addiction Medicine

CC

The Honorable Orrin Hatch

The Honorable Ron Wyden

The Honorable Lamar Alexander

The Honorable Patty Murray

The Honorable Greg Walden

The Honorable Frank Pallone

The Honorable Kevin Brady

The Honorable Richard Neal