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Vicker V. DiGravio III PRESIDENT / CEO
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ASSOCIATION
FOR BEHAVIORAL
HEALTHCARE

December 13, 2017

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

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Senate Minority Leader
The Capitol S-221
Washington, DC 20510

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

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
House Democratic Leader
The Capitol H-204
Washington, DC 20515

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

I am writing to you on behalf of the Association for Behavioral Healthcare (ABH), a statewide association in Massachusetts representing more than eighty mental health and addiction treatment organizations.

Senator Warren has recently called for doubling funding for key mental health programs at the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

ABH and our members support Senator Warren's efforts to increase funding for mental health services. Specifically, we support the Senator's call to increase funding for SAMHSA's Community Mental Health Services Block Grant (MHBG) to \$1.126 billion from its current funding level of \$563 million. We also support increased funding for SAMHSA's Programs of Regional and National Significance (PRNS) to \$798 million from its current level of \$399 million. These investments, if approved, will provide almost \$1 billion in new funding for community-based mental health services across the country.

ABH members are the primary providers of publicly-funded behavioral healthcare services in Massachusetts, serving approximately 81,000 Massachusetts residents daily, 1.5 million residents annually, and employing over 46,500 people. Our members struggle every day to meet the service needs of individuals living with mental health disorders.

According to SAMHSA's most recent *Behavioral Health Barometer*, the number of adolescents who have experienced a major depressive episode has increased nationally and in Massachusetts since 2011. In Massachusetts, only 52% of those adolescents received any treatment for their mental health disorder.

For adults, only 55% of individuals with a diagnosed mental illness received treatment services in the year prior to the survey.

These statistics support what our members see on a daily basis across Massachusetts. There is more demand for mental health treatment than there is service capacity. Increased funding for the MHBG and PRNS programs will help states, counties, municipalities and the healthcare providers with whom they partner to expand services to treat individuals who are currently unable to access treatment.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this request. Timely access to quality mental health services is critical to the health and safety of communities across the nation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vicker V. DiGravio III". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Vicker V. DiGravio
President/CEO

CC: The Honorable Elizabeth Warren