

July 31, 2012

The Honorable John Kerry
U.S. Senate
Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Grassley
U.S. Senate
Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Kerry and Grassley:

On behalf of the under signed organizations, we are pleased to offer our support of S. 3289, the Children's Mental Health Accessibility Act. We applaud your bipartisan commitment to ensuring children and adolescents have access to a full array of mental health services that they require to effectively address their individual behavioral needs and avoid institutional care.

Through this legislation, an important demonstration project that nine states have been engaged in with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) for the past five years will be made permanent. This demonstration project provides children and adolescents community alternatives to psychiatric residential treatment facility (PRTF) care using a current Medicaid waiver option, the 1915c home and community-based services waiver. The project has successfully showcased the ability of states to address the mental health needs of children and adolescents safely, effectively and efficiently with intensive home and community-based services in lieu of placing them in the institutional setting of a PRTF. The demonstration project has achieved positive outcomes for the children being served with intensive home and community-based services, including maintaining or improving their functional status. Additionally, this provision of care is cost effective with these home-based interventions averaging a third of the cost of the institutional settings.

The Children's Mental Health Accessibility Act is a positive step in expanding Medicaid access to comprehensive home-and community based services for children and adolescents requiring a PRTF level of care. The legislation also is a meaningful step in upholding the dignity of individuals with intellectual disabilities. It does so by replacing the term mental retardation with intellectual disability in the Social Security Act.

We appreciate your leadership on these important issues and look forward to working with you and your staff to enact S. 3289 this year.

For additional information, please contact:

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Sincerely,

National and Regional

ACCESS

ACCSES

Adoptions Together

Alliance for Children and Families

America Forward

American Association on Health and Disability

American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy

American Association of Practicing Psychiatrists

American Association for Psychosocial Rehabilitation

American Dance Therapy Association

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

American Group Psychotherapy Association

American Orthopsychiatric Association

American Psychiatric Association

American Psychoanalytic Association

American Psychotherapy Association

Appletree Institute for Education Innovation

Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare

Association of University Centers on Disabilities

Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law

Black Administrators in Child Welfare

Boys Town

Center for the Study of Social Policy

Child Welfare League of America

Childhood Neurodevelopmental Disability Center

Commongood Careers

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance

Easter Seals

Family Voices

First Focus Campaign for Children

Foster Family-Based Treatment Association

Holt International

Association of Jewish Family & Children's Agencies

The Jewish Federations of North America

LIFT

Lutheran Services in America Disability Network

Mental Health America

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)

National Association of County Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability Directors

National Association of the Dually Diagnosed

National CASA Association

National Coalition for Mental Health Recovery

National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare

National Disability Rights Network

Public Allies

Schizophrenia and Related Disorders Alliance of America

School Social Work Association of America
Southern Poverty Law Center
The Arc of the United States
The Children's Aid Society
Treatment Communities of America
U.S. Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association
Voice for Adoption
Voices for America's Children
Year Up
Youth Villages

State and Local

California

Hathaway-Sycamores Child and Family Services
Lincoln Child Center

Delaware

Children and Families First

Georgia

Families First
Georgia Alliance of Therapeutic Services for Children and Families
Georgia Association of Homes and Services for Children
Voices for Georgia's Children

Illinois

Child Care Association of Illinois
Illinois Collaboration on Youth
Lawrence Hall Youth Services
One Hope United
The Salvation Army Family & Community Services

Indiana

Families First

Kentucky

NECCO

Maryland

Advocates for Children and Youth
The Maryland Coalition of Families for Children's Mental Health

Mississippi

Just Advocacy of Mississippi
Mississippi Families as Allies for Children's Mental Health, Inc.

Missouri

Children's Foundation of Mid-America
Cornerstones of Care
Gillis Center

Montana

Family Support Network
Parents, Let's Unite for Kids (PLUK)

Nebraska

Nebraska Families Collaborative

New Jersey

Jewish Family Service of Bergen and North Hudson

New York

Gustavus Adolphus Family Services
Hillside Family of Agencies
Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services
New York State Citizens' Coalition for Children (NYSCCC)
The LaSalle School

Oregon

Impact NW

Pennsylvania

Family and Community Service of Delaware County
Liberty Resources
Pennsylvania Council on Children, Youth & Family Services

Texas

Coalition of Texans with Disabilities (CTD)

Virginia

Voices for Virginia's Children

Washington

Secret Harbor-Foster Care Resources and Companions & Care Senior Services

Wisconsin

Jewish Family Services